THE MODERN ARTHUR
AND OTHER POEMS

C. W. PURNELL

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/modernarthurothe00purniala

THE MODERN ARTHUR

THE
MODERN ARTHUR

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

CHARLES WILLIAM PURNELL

WHITCOMBE & TOMBS, LIMITED
LONDON MELBOURNE
CHRISTCHURCH, WELLINGTON AND DUNEDIN, N.Z.
1912

PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.,
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

PR
6031
P975m

PREFACE

THE following poems were composed in New Zealand, beneath the gleam of the Southern Cross—a country wherein all of man's works are new, while those of Nature are very old. There, summer heats prevail in December, and winter's frosts in July. The subjects which it offers for poetry are not those of the Old World, but the aspects of primitive nature and the traditions and beliefs of a barbarous race. The reader should bear these facts in mind when perusing my verses.

Part II contains some Maori legends clothed in a poetical garb. Maori legends are Polynesian legends, with local alterations. Few are worth preserving. The Maoris, before the advent of Europeans to the islands which they inhabit, were warlike cannibals, sunk in superstition, without a written language, or any clearly defined religious beliefs, if indeed they can be said to have possessed religious beliefs, properly so called, at all. The men whose memories they cherished were warriors who had distinguished themselves by the slaughter of a multitude of human beings, and by nothing else. It is not in such an unfavourable clime that we could expect the rich blooms of imagination to unclose, or great men to arise whose works challenge the admiration of

701226

mankind. Maori legends abound in puerilities and obscenities, and often with inconsistencies. Examples of the last will be found in the poems relating to Hina, or Ina, as her name is variously pronounced. Nevertheless, some of the legends are interesting as showing the crude beliefs and strange fancies of a primitive race. I have, of necessity, been compelled to grant myself a certain amount of poetical licence in narrating the traditions which I have versified.

CHAS. W. PURNELL.

LONDON, *June* 1912.

ALPHABETICAL CONTENTS

PART I

	PAGE
ÆOLIAN HARP, THE	143
ALL'S WELL	247
ASPIRATION, AN	233
BATTLE OF LIFE, THE	240
BELLS OF THE PAST	163
BIRD-SONGS	116
BLACKBIRD, THE	111
BLIND RESTORED TO SIGHT, THE	235
BLOW SOFT, YE WINDS	95
BROTHER AND SISTER	182
BY THE RIVER	106
CASTAWAY, THE	124
CHAMBERS OF THE SEA, THE	64
CHANGELESS FOR EVER	105
CHURCH BELLS, THE	147
CITY OF DREAMS, THE	37
CITY, THE	207
COMET, THE	90

PAGE

COPPER BEECH, THE 154
CORAL ISLE, THE 223

DAYS OF ARCADY, THE 227
DELHI DURBAR, THE 257
DELPHI 191
DREAM, A 117
DREAMS 107

ENCHANTED LAND, THE 102
EVENING 245
EVENING MUSINGS 173

FAIRY LAND 141
FALLING LEAVES 168
FANCY 135
FANCY, A. 219
FATED SHIP, THE 70
FIRE, THE 214
FLOWER GATHERER, THE 179
FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, THE 217
FROM ROCKY LEDGE 127

GARDEN, THE 157
GLIMPSES 139
GOBLIN LAND 28
GOLD 211
GUITAR SONG, A 149

ALPHABETICAL CONTENTS

	PAGE
HARVEST OF DAYS, THE	243
HYPATIA	198
IDUNA	188
IDYLL, AN	232
INVITATION, THE	131
ISLAND IN THE SEA, THE	97
LAMENT, A	109
LIFE	255
LITTLE THINGS	176
LO, WE HAVE GROWN MORE WISE	133
LOVE, THE GARDENER	104
MAGIC TUNE, THE	145
MEADOW, THE	162
MEDITATIONS	137
MESSENGER, THE	34
MODERN ARTHUR, THE	3
MONK, THE	201
NATURE	122
NEW ZEALAND SHEPHERD'S REVERIE, THE	170
OMDURMAN	204
ORCHARD, THE	160
PARTING WAYS, THE	253
PEOPLE OF THE SEA, THE	68
PHANTOM SHIP, THE	60

PAGE

RAILWAY TRAIN, THE 237
REVERIE, A 22

SEAGULL, THE 53
SEA REMEMBERS NOT, THE 58
SHIPS 40
SIMILE, A 242
SINGERS OF THE PAST, THE 230
SIRENS, THE 184
SKETCH, A 225
SOME WORDS 256
SOMETIMES, WHEN FLUSHED WITH PRIDE OF LIFE . 251
SONG OF SOLITUDE, THE 119
SONG OF THE SEA, THE 50
SONG OF THE SUN, THE 82
SONGS OF THE MOON 73
SONNETS 259
SOUL, THE 244
SPRING 165
STARS, THE 85
STORY OF CRACOW, A 194

THRUSH, THE 113
TREE, THE 151
TROPIC ISLES 221
TRUE LIFE, THE 249

ALPHABETICAL CONTENTS

PAGE

VISION, A 31
VOICES OF THE EARTH, THE 129

WARSHIP, THE 55
WINDS, THE 88
WORLD AND ITS WAYS, THE 25
WORLD OUR HOME, THE 92

PART II

ANTARCTIC, THE 373
AUSTRAL STEAMSHIP, THE 384

BATTLE OF THE SEA BIRDS WITH THE LAND BIRDS, THE 309

CHANGED LAND, A 376
COMING OF CAPTAIN COOK TO NEW ZEALAND, THE 347

EASTER ISLAND 364

FALL OF THE KAURI TREE, THE . . . 388
FISHING OF MAUI, THE 269

INA 324
INA'S VOYAGE TO THE SACRED ISLE . . . 277

LAST OF THE MOAS, THE 337
LOVES OF TAKARANGI AND RAU-MAHORA, THE . 291

MACQUARIE ISLAND 370
MAEROERO, THE 327

ALPHABETICAL CONTENTS

PAGE

MAID OF THE MIST, THE 284

MAORIS' EMIGRATION FROM HAWAIKI, THE . . 329

MARAMA AND INA 321

MAUI AND MAHUIKA 340

NEW ZEALAND 358

PACIFIC OCEAN, THE 366

SOLANDER, THE 361

SONS OF THE SOUTH 386

SOUTHERN ALPS, THE 350

SOUTHERN NORSEMEN, THE 353

SOUTHERN OCEAN, THE 382

SPIRIT OF THE SOUTHERN GLOBE, THE . . 379

STORY OF MANGAIA, A 332

TAMA AND RUKUTIA 297

TANGAROA 356

TE REINGA 274

TINIRAU AND HINA 315

TONGARIRO 390

PART I

THE MODERN ARTHUR

PRELUDE

This painful lot of modern days,
The weariness to sit and gaze
For aye upon a settled mode
Of artificial life—a load
Gigantic and immovable—
On Arthur's spirit slowly fell,
On Arthur with a fancy wild
And aspirations undefiled,
A mind replete with ancient lore
Of deeds that echo on the shore
Of memory, as the solemn sea
Beats on the land eternally,
And like a war-cry 'mid the strife
Strong thrilled a wish throughout his life
To clothe the pure and glowing thought
With earnest deeds by gold unbought
From innate virtue flowing free
Along a vale of poetry,
And since he did not care to feel
Or witness woes he could not heal
He shunned the crowded city where
Rich commerce gives a petty share
To thousands while in wealthy state
The full-fed trader sits elate.

Long rambled he on Norway's coast,
Where from the clouds the glacier sinks
With slow progression, like a ghost
That through the tired hamlet slinks,
Unto the fiord, cold and lorn.
The wan light loometh there forlorn,
Far northwards trend the splintered rocks,
Fierce at their base the hoarse sea knocks,
Creeps to the Pole the precipice,
Lost there amid a world of ice—
Until the nimble Saxon blood
Stirring awoke another mood,
Then haled he to a Southern clime
To view the relics of past time,
And dwell in Greece an idle day
And dream how once there sailed away
A band of heroes from its shore
For distant Colchis—th' Argo bore
The heroes, and their leader's name
Was Jason, full of power and fame.
They sought a magic fleece, which borne
From Colchis past the Golden Horn,
Laid at the feet of Pelias down,
Would change into a royal crown.
Those were the days when men were young,
And lightly their fresh carols rung
Across a new world and the free
The unexplored and boundless sea.
But though such rambles might procure
A pleasure delicate and pure,
And elevate the mental sense
Unto luxurious eminence,
Yet Arthur ne'er could be content

But something lacked where'er he went,
It was not lack of power to breathe
The air of pleasure, but a high
Benevolence that could achieve
For all mankind deep sympathy;
And had there been from out the world
A single cry of anguish hurled,
One human creature in distress,
It had impaired his happiness.
And when he roamed through cities where
The arts bloom in a fertile air,
But most amid the populace,
The eager and peculiar race
That dwell in London, share its pride,
And fill its causeways like a tide,
He saw the evil of the time,
The pauper and the son of crime,
A breeding mass of loathsome sin,
Palace without, a tomb within,
A festering canker and a dread,
A skeleton with beauty wed.
No mortal arm, though stanch its blow,
A host of Titans could o'erthrow,
And Arthur felt his soul wax dim
Amid such poverty and sin;
The self-same track, both soon and late,
Trod o'er and o'er with tutored gait,
An endless band in ceaseless reel
Revolving on a narrow wheel.
And thus to his most cherished friend,
Ralph Waldron, soldier of renown,
He spake: "Shall we not end
These idle days and batter down

The wall of custom with our deeds ?
This dull reiteration breeds
A sluggish and mischievous grief,
A want that ever craves relief.
Beneath the blue Australian sky
Where warmly breathes the Northern air
An English race right manfully
Builds up new homes and cities there ;
Lo, in the morning of their fame
Methinks I hear a clarion shrill
The splendour of their day proclaim
In burning tones that strangely thrill,
For surely there will men be wise
And make of life a pleasant lot,
While Art, descending from the skies,
Shall glorify the humblest cot."
As when, at some high festival,
The curtains of the evening fall,
Gleams suddenly a beacon's blaze
Illumining the dusky haze,
Then instant from a neighbouring height
A friendly pyre glares red and bright,
So answered Waldron readily
With Arthur's thoughts in sympathy :
" If but the battle loomed afar,
The frenzy and the din of war,
The loud artillery, clad with smoke,
Men falling like the riven oak,
The bayonets glittering through the heath,
And over all the laurel wreath,
It would be my desire to go
Like other soldiers 'gainst the foe.
But now the nations rest in peace

And martial conflicts all surcease,
While o'er the mart and thronged exchange
The fox-eyed people keenly range;
The ledger for the sword they hold,
And cheat each other of their gold.
Much should I love adventure new,
Whose breezes would my youth renew,
Erect the spirit proud and free,
Like rolling charge of cavalry."
And many another countenance
Grew flushed at Arthur's high pretence,
And dreamed that on a distant shore
There must be happiness in store,
More spacious seas, more lustrous skies,
Ungarnered fields of bold emprise.
What recks it that their names and lot
Like morning dew are now forgot?
Their hopes and aspirations flown
Like leaves by autumn breezes blown?
The work which by their hands was wrought
May have been with some merit fraught;
True labour is not wasted, though
The workman lies the sod below,
The offspring of his deeds remain
A widespread, fructifying gain,
As fertile seeds of plant obscure
Are borne upon the wind secure
Over a spacious continent,
And lo! in mind and body spent,
The traveller sees—the hilltop won—
A thousand blossoms in the sun;
'Tis thus the actions of the sage
Will flourish in a future age.

THE VOYAGE

Glows the sunlight on the ocean,
And each wave vibrating
Joyously with rapid motion
Bears aloft its silver crest.
Buoyantly the ship progresseth,
While behind the silver foam
To the far horizon traileth
Where the tired sea birds rest.

Throbs the engine, slowly, faster,
Driving on its noble charge,
Like a pitiless, cold master,
Giving neither rest nor marge;
Proudly flies in royal circles,
Silently in thought alone,
Albatross, the king of sea birds,
Musing on his airy throne.

Once the sunset hid in splendour
Lands mysterious in the West,
Where the Fount of Life welled freely
From the rock's relenting breast;
Once the Southern Cross resplendent
With its golden-pointed crest
Watched strange nations gently sinking
Night by night into their rest.

Then the mariner bold-hearted,
On his fragile bark and rude,
From his time-worn course departed,
Broke the ocean's solitude,

Saw in fancy many a monster
  Wallowing in frolic mood,
All the Nereids disporting,
  Lively, waiting to be wooed.

Oft the sudden spectre flitted
  Grim athwart the trembling mast,
When the stormy night-clouds knitted,
  Closely woven, by the blast.
Hung around the ship a horror,
  Seemed the light for ever past,
Gone the day, unto dark Hades
  Seemed the fated vessel cast.

They are fled, these old romances,
  Nothing now beneath the sun
Remains unknown ; lo ! it glances
  On strange wires that lightly run
Right across the barren region
  Where the Israelite begun
All the wandering and the penance
  Which the Land of Promise won.

Now the night, with many shadows,
  Slowly darkens all the sky,
One by one her gems displaying,
  Gladdens the sad sailor's eye,
Breaking through the flaming waters
  Fishes rush of monstrous size,
Far below the mollusc dwelleth
  Silently for centuries.

THE ARRIVAL

Slow fades all romance from the eye,
Yet it, alas ! will surely die,
Killed by the lack of all it needs,
The sweet beliefs on which it feeds.
Its blossoms, drooping one by one
Before their beauty had begun
To be distinguished or with meet
Full-odoured fragrance was complete,
Shall fall, and scattered o'er the ground
By some chance wanderer may be found,
Though in the soul is haply nursed
The seeds of flowers of hardier kind
Which, favoured by the time, shall burst
Their shackles, and forthwith unwind
A scroll of colours that will break
Deep-hued as any mountain lake.
So when our early fancies dead,
Our youthful hopes and wishes fled,
Perchance a richer light appears
Illumining our riper years,
The world, as if some angel form
With Heaven's eternal beauty warm
Had cast upon its sombre fields
The splendour of ten thousand shields,
Puts on a lustre that beguiles
The senses like a fairy's smiles.

Thus Arthur came, with fancy dight,
Unto the land Zealandia hight,
And dreamed that in this land might be
Souls with his own in sympathy ;

But, lo ! the spirit of the Time
Was breathing in the Southern clime,
The hungry lust for gold made sick
The feverish body politic,
Of worth a sole decisive test—
With riches has this man been blessed ?
'Natheless a nobler life would find
The better treasures of the mind.
Kind Nature has, with generous hand,
With beauty decked this favoured land ;
The visions that all Nature dress
In robes of varied loveliness,
Though from the sordid eye concealed,
Are to the purer soul revealed.
Thus sombre clouds, with mantles dun,
Conceal the brightness of the sun,
Yet still unceasingly it burns
With splendour of the heavenly urns.
Then Arthur said to Ralph—"No goal
This people have in view ; the sole
End of their being is to heap
A little gold ere their last sleep ;
Let us the busy town forsake
And with our comrades now betake
Ourselves unto some distant part
Where Nature undisturbed by art
Serenely reigns ; and there will we
Dwell in a new community
Where we may taste, exempt from strife,
The merits of a simple life."

The Forest

A deep, dark wooded ravine, cloven through
A mighty pile of rock, rent sharp asunder
In olden time, when the Earth's portals flew
Wide open at some god's imperious thunder;
In sombre clusters, lo! the tall pines grew,
The cloudlets resting on their leaves of umber;
Slow flew the fierce-eyed hawk adown the glen
And marked the tui and the cowering wren.

Two tents, rude fashioned, by a boulder's side
Were pitched, and through the close-set trees
Was heard the sleepy sound of a cool tide
Descending from a height; a gentle breeze
In lazy gusts rose fitfully and died
Away into a calm of luscious ease:
It seemed the land of which old fables tell,
Where dreamy lotus-eaters idly dwell.

Here lived our friends—at least the greater part,
For some, when novel doctrines were avowed,
Because those signs were not upon their chart
Rejoined forthwith the unreflecting crowd.
To fill the company with noble art
Was Arthur's wish, but found few men endowed
With minds impatient of the earthly slime
And fewer still who cared to wrestle with the time.

Yet haply they were wise; for who can dwell
For aye amid a pure and subtle air?
Man is half animal, and cannot quell
By proud desires his grosser wants, nor bear

One half his load alone ; perchance 'twere well
If he had drifted without thought or care ;
For wisest thought prevents not tear nor sigh,
And death's sure foot creeps on unfalteringly.

His chief new follower a rude, rough man,
With name Tom Carson was this carle bedight,
Unlettered—that's to say, he could not scan
A line of Homer, nor knew who ranged the height
Of hoar Olympus, nor how Hector ran
From fierce Achilles when the direful fight
Rang round the walls of Troy, where Trojans stood
And saw their leader fall, the brave and good.

Nor was he versed in commerce' devious ways,
Where sharpened wit contends with sharpened wit,
And lust of gold enthralls the feverish days
While from the heart all noble passions flit ;
The fane, bereft of holy prayer and praise,
For Mammon's sinful worship only fit ;
While all the joys that social pleasure brings
To Carson seemed the weariest of things.

He loved the solemn forest, the dark sea,
For ever changing in its beauty, as those know
Who dwell upon its shores and watch its free
And merry sportings in the sunshine's glow,
Its ripples when the moon smiles placidly,
Its foaming summits when the storm winds blow.
And there had coiled, with many evils rife,
The love of whisky round his chequered life.

In youth he wed a maiden, but she died.
Slight was her outward beauty, but her eyes
Shone with a tender lustre, and she tried
With fairy arts and innocent disguise
To lead this wayward man and gently guide
Him to the place where tranquil comfort lies.
Her soul was full of love, soft and sincere,
Warm as a summer sunset in Cashmere.

If he in times mediæval had breathed,
A Paladin brave-hearted had impelled
The Christian 'gainst the infidel, and wreathed
Wild romance with the piety of eld,
Filled with religious zeal would have achieved
Conspicuous deeds, and Christ's dear name upheld,
But now he rusted, like a sword at rest,
Consumed by his own energies suppressed.

Hard by the small encampment, 'mid the trees,
A row of cabins stood ; scarred trunks of fern
Composed their walls ; the soft and sultry breeze
Played lightly o'er the nikau's graceful fronds
Upon the roof-tops ; and round about all these
Rude huts young children sported, nor did learn
One word from books ; nor intellectual wealth
Had they, but perfect freedom and good health.

Their fathers, gathered here from many lands,
French, English, Yankees, natives of Peru,
Broke up the soil, and sought with eager hands
The precious ore for which most mortals sue ;
And lo ! swift rumour said that, in rich bands,
The yellow gold had met their gladdened view.

Then, with the fever flushed and minds intent,
All Arthur's friends, save Roland, thither went.

Man loves adventure, but loves gold still more,
  The two conjoined do lead him where they may,
The trader through hot deserts takes his store
  Though hosts of plundering Arabs haunt the way;
The seas may swell, the winds and surges roar,
  The laden ship regards not their affray.
A strange desire to join in the wild quest
Soon Arthur and his steadfast friend possessed.

It was a life new, rugged, harsh, and wild;
  They laboured hard, and by the hatchet's stroke
The huge pines fell and o'er their trunks up-piled
  The cataract in a thousand bubbling broke;
Deep in the rocks, with ardent hopes beguiled,
  The miners crept, and the dull echoes woke.
And oft the sulphury train, with sudden might,
Brought rock and trees down hurtling from the height.

The forest gorges where the fairies roved,
  Their only refuge on the noisy Earth,
Were spoiled of those cool groves which they once loved,
  Where ancient kauris of gigantic girth
Looked on the clustered fern trees and approved
  The fountain laughing at the streamlet's birth;
A few green islets on the distant sea
Slumbered amid the sunlight peacefully.

Coarse heaps of "mullock" soon defiled the glen,
  The tramway groped along the mountain side,
The freeborn stream, that rushed and sparkled when
  Amongst the boulders it dispersed its tide,

Within restricted bounds (as oft with men)
In dull and decorous course was made to glide.
Yet still the spirit lived, and when the gale
Beat high the waters burst their narrow pale.

This life peculiar had a nameless charm,
The heirloom of the ruddy mountaineer
Who roams untrammelled and without alarm
Looks down the precipice that droppeth sheer.
Acuter grew the senses, and the arm
More vigorous in its temper did appear.
And in the evening round a mighty fire
The miners seated joined in merry choir.

By all Tom Carson, with complete accord,
"The prince of singers" was allowed to be,
A full rich tenor, carelessly he poured
Forth wild resonant floods of harmony.
Strange were the songs he sang, and like a sword
They racked and pierced through all hypocrisy;
Full oft he sang some fierce prophetic strain,
And loud his comrades shouted the refrain.

But Roland, by such reckless lyrics vexed,
Would leave the circle, and within his tent
Retired would meditate where duty next
Might call him—where duty bade he went;
"Fear God, honour the King," his favourite text,
Whose vigorous threads with all his arts were blent;
And when the bullets hurtled through the air
They fired his soul as if a god were near.

A Havelock he, if time and chance had made
An opening for his own peculiar skill;

A Blake perhaps had but his lot been laid
When Britons fought on land or sea at will,
'Natheless his temper was too dull and staid,
And lacked the joy which doth the senses thrill;
Less great than Cromwell and his stern compeers
We best like Rupert and his cavaliers.

Month after month thus passed, but little gold
Repaid the miners' toil; and then a drought
Oppressed the land, and where the brooks had rolled
Impetuous through the woods in lusty rout
Dry stones and pebbles lay; no longer trolled
The birds in chirrupings their gladness out;
And when the people saw the fierce sun wane
They almost wished it would not rise again.

The forest leafless, sapless, broken-boughed,
Became a mass of torches which a chance
Might light to utter ruin; the wind soughed
Freshly no more, nor made the leaflets dance;
Thick on the ground there lay a leafy crowd
Struck down by haughty Phœbus' gold-tipped lance.
One day the chance happed, and the ruddy fire
Seized on the trees and made the hills a pyre.

Quick marched the crackling flame; a sullen roar,
Not loud, but fearful, rumbled through the wood,
While pitchy smoke in floating masses bore
The burning fragments of its parent's food
E'en to the camp, and shook the embers o'er
The places where the rustic cabins stood.
Then rushed the miners from their hollow "drives"
To save their homes, as bees their threatened hives.

Full fearful of the fierce advancing foe
They feverishly removed from out the frail
Tinder-like huts, on which the wind did blow,
Their household goods, and each with these did hale
Unto the tunnels, there unharmed to stand
With goods, wife, children, till the fiery gale
Was past, for vain indeed the hope
With such a torrid hurricane to cope.

Though effort great by every man was made,
Scarce were the humble chattels rescued quite
Than all the camp was hid in smoky shade
Traversed by tortuous streaks of reddish light;
Half-choked the women cowered down and laid
Fast hold upon their children in their fright;
Reft from the world by walls of glowing flame
They looked for death until the morning came.

Ascending in the dim and mystic dawn
Weird wreaths of smoke rose slowly from the ground
While here and there a blackened trunk and torn
Broke gauntly through the mist that curled around,
Like priests of Uz by thought and famine worn
Whom break of day at dread enchantments found,
Before the blasting presence of their might
The glorious forest had evanished quite.

The danger now was past, and as the day
Grew slowly older sank th' expiring fires,
The smoke dispersed reluctantly away,
And left a multitude of glowing pyres
Whereon the little flames did glistening play
With their irregular and tinted spires;

But not till afternoon the miners dared
Review their camp to see if aught was spared.

One hapless wretch by bitter luck had strayed
  Into the forest from the camp remote
To cut some timber in a quiet glade.
  Therein with jaded arm and fevered throat
He sat adown where erst a streamlet played,
  And through his languid brain he let the dim thoughts float,
While round about, as fearless as the breeze,
The gentle robins fluttered 'midst the trees.

A few years back his ling'ring memory went
  To where, amid the combs of Somerset,
A pretty homestead gave a sweet content
  To one dear child, himself, and loved Annette.
How well the cornfield's ripening colours blent
  With Heaven's bright hues when low the sun was set!
The church bells rang with clear and mellow chime
The manifold occurrences of Time!

Zealandia's shores displayed the hues of hope—
  False and delusive was the flattering show;
Long were their struggles, but they could not cope
  With that malignant fate which laid them low.
In misery's gulf a deeper deep would ope
  Still to their eyes more painful scenes of woe,
Yet their devout affection ne'er grew dumb,
Love's star gleams brightest when the night is come.

While thus he mused the luckless man discerned
  A warmer presence fill the sultry air,
But heeded little, till by chance he turned
  His languid eyes and saw a reddish glare

Far off, but quick advancing as it burned
The leaves and brittle branches that were there;
Then up he leaped and rapidly glanced round,
As doth the lion hearing a strange sound.

The fire sped on; a semicircle vast,
A giant scythe that mowed the forest down,
Whose blade prolonged itself at every cast
And made a wider range of death its own.
Now here, now there, the fated man caught fast
Within the snare sought to escape his doom.
In vain the attempt; the flames like living foes
Divined his steps, and barred each path he chose.

His comrades, deeming that he might have gained
A sheltering bank, or some secluded cave,
Made search until no longer hope remained
That e'en his bones could find a Christian grave;
But when decades of active years have waned
And many cities look upon the wave
Some idle loiterer, lighting on the spot,
May find a few charred bones—the name forgot.

THE WORLD RECALLS

Lo! man is apt for many things,
Strong work and dim imaginings,
A wallower in the world's vile sty,
A searcher of the distant sky.
Coarse is the warp but fine the woof,
Fretted with gold the rugged roof,
He hears a voice that bids him soar
And realms celestial explore;
But scarce the journey has begun,
Ere any treasures have been won,

Than daily want or sordid need,
The piping of some foolish screed,
Makes his proud aspirations vain,
Turns him to common thoughts again.
The world, his mother, makes her moan,
Claims him for herself alone,
Far from her fold he cannot stray,
Nor her dull mandates disobey.
Throughout the stages of his life
His soul and body are at strife,
One struggling to unfold its wings
And rise into divinest things,
The other creeping day by day
Slowly amongst the miry clay;
Together bound by mystic chains,
Over the soul the body reigns,
Yet sometimes flames a sudden fire,
The soul expands with noble ire,
The cowering flesh is cast aside
Like flotsam by a roaring tide.

Thus Arthur found that 'twas in vain
He strove to break old Custom's chain
And make new rules that do not chime
With current fashion of the time.
For, baffled oft by hostile chance,
Man is the child of circumstance;
His soul, in every varied stage,
Is but a mirror of the age.
Yet noble aims, though vainly spent,
Become a very sacrament
To make men to high things aspire
And fill the world with chaster fire.

A REVERIE

For us this Earth may be,
The sky, and sea,
But dullard things, unblest,
Or they may seem
A wondrous dream,
A vision of the deep made manifest.

Our lives are passing strange,
For thought may range
Adown the rugged slope of mundane things;
Or it may climb
The steeps sublime
That lead to regions where the seraph sings.

All that we here behold,
Both new and old,
Imagination's banners trooping by
Are but the shapes
Our fancy drapes
And wears the colours of the mind's own dye.

By inward strivings stirred,
By longings spurred,
We seek to find what lies behind the veil
That hides the fate
Of poor and great
When from their eyes the light of Earth doth fail.

Our life is twain,
A ravelled skein,
A fire celestial burning in the clod,
Desire that bites,
Gross appetites,
And aspirations to be nearer God.

Yet human love is sweet,
We hear the beat
Of angels' wings a moment nigh the earth,
And float along
Rich waves of song
That in the groves of Paradise have birth.

Sometimes we hope and pray
For a pure day
When starved and worn the brute in us shall die,
And from the soul
The dark clouds roll
And Heaven lie open to the ravished eye.

Then by fierce passion torn,
Helpless, forlorn,
We plunge into the murky slough and mire;
There wallowing deep
Our senses steep
Themselves in pleasures that are gross and dire.

Perchance a tender tune
With its soft rune
Ripples a kindly music through the breast;
The world grows glad
As if it had
A moment heard the anthems of the blessed.

And there are homely joys
Of little noise
That soothe our lot with tranquillising rays:
The child and wife,
Freedom from strife,
And friendship's beams illumining our days.

The bird, the bee, the flower,
The noonday hour,
The cascade glittering through the sun-kissed trees,
The mossy dell,
Where streamlets dwell,
The fragrant breathings of the summer breeze,

The creatures we espy
That greet the eye,
When we roam over plain, or hill, or dale,
All are but flecks,
Unheeded specks,
That float from out Creation's inmost pale.

There throbs the heart of all
We Nature call,
And lurks the secret of the stars and sun,
Whose orbs adorn
One, night—one, morn,
And through the ether on swift courses run.

And with each passing year
Are heard more clear
The voices of a folk that dwell afar,
Whose home is where
A finer air
Pervades the regions where the angels are.

THE WORLD AND ITS WAYS

When the light that wells from a distant bourne
Illumines the mind's dark haze,
Upsprings, full and clear, in the magic dawn,
The world and its wondrous ways.

For the old Earth swings through the starry space
Where the mystic comets gleam,
And the flame-robed suns, in a royal race,
Roll past like a gorgeous dream.

We are offspring all of a time long gone
When the formless cosmic haze
Breathed deep the breath of life, and then was born
The world and its wondrous ways.

For the brute is wed to a soul divine,
The dross to the bright ore clings,
Through the mud-born mists and the vapours shine
Lofty imaginings.

And man toils hardly in the paths of wrong
To gather a little gold,
The soul grows dim while the brute grows strong,
And soon life's story is told.

Yet still from his zeal and his ready art
Have risen the noble fane,
The palaces proud, and the splendid mart,
The might of the roaring train.

And the lightning chained by his master hand
Where its ruler wills doth roam,
His messages it bears from land to land,
And beneath the ocean foam.

And the painter limns with a magic brush,
And the sculptor carves a stone
Till his soul's bright moods through the marble flush
And render the image its own.

The blue ocean stretches from sky to sky
While the steamship cleaves the wave,
And strewn through its depths unburied there lie
The bones of the honoured brave.

And the mountains flecked with a little snow
Loom clear in the morning sun,
But their shapes grow dim when its orb sinks low
And the ardent day is done.

And the forests old, where the Dryads dwell,
And the Fays make their abode,
Clothe the rugged hills and the silent dell
With a green and living robe.

And the gaunt land throbs and the toiling sea
Through the slowly passing years
With the full deep pulse and ecstasy
That quicken the distant spheres.

And each mortal soul, by a golden chain,
  By its kindred to the sky,
Is linked with the stars in the azure main
  And knows not its destiny.

. . . . .

A little while we live, and often dream
  What we shall find upon the farther shore,
But one day shall we see its welcome gleam,
  Then we shall dream no more.

GOBLIN LAND

A REGION craggy, worn, and wild,
Where the rugged rocks up-piled
Bear huge gnarled and knotted trees
Stiffly bending to the breeze
When it roams along the glen
Never pressed by feet of men.
Goblin land ! goblin land !

Sombre clouds their shadows whisk
O'er the sun's great copper disc,
Gaunt birds through the boscage flit,
And their hoarse cries intermit
With the torrent's changeful roar,
Chaunting tunes not heard before.
Goblin land ! goblin land !

Here the goblins, troop by troop,
Shake the rocks with their wild whoop,
And with dances weird and strange
Through the savage region range,
Dances rhythmic, flowing free,
Full of fire and fantasy.
Goblin land ! goblin land !

Knotted limbs with passion starting,
To each body grim imparting
Motion like the stormy sea
When the wind howls angrily,
Thus they beat a frantic measure,
Thus their hearts are knit together.
Goblin land ! goblin land !

Sometimes from his cavern home
Comes to earth the sweating gnome,
Rolls his fiery eyes around,
Marks the goblins as they bound,
Waves of passion 'gin to roll
Through his dense and sluggish soul.
Goblin land ! goblin land !

Music weird of wondrous tone,
Wafted from Euterpe's throne,
Flushes all the air around
With rich streams of languid sound,
Stirs the blood within the veins,
Wakes new pleasures and new pains.
Goblin land ! goblin land !

When the lustrous moon shines clear,
Gleaming from her lofty sphere,
Clothes the land in mystic light,
With a wan and pale delight,
Then the fairies come and go,
Lightly tripping to and fro.
Goblin land ! goblin land !

GOBLIN LAND

Land where elves and spirits throng,
Part to Earth it doth belong,
Part to realms which man discerns
When the soul within him burns,
By its fitful flame revealed,
Half disclosed, and half concealed,
Goblin land ! goblin land !

A VISION

Slow heaved the ocean through the night,
  Which late the tempest bore,
And hour by hour the hollow surge
  Fell on the sounding shore.

The sky's black dome extended high,
  With lustrous stars bestrewn,
And silently amidst them hung
  A wan and mystic moon.

And while, in deepest musings wrapped,
  I roamed upon the strand,
A strange and wondrous mist rose from
  The sea on every hand.

In undulations weird it rolled
  Betwixt the sea and sky,
It hid from sight the ocean vast,
  The star-lit canopy.

Then from its mighty folds were born
  The shapes of ancient things,
The story long of England's life,
  Battles, and priests, and kings.

The Briton wild, by Druid taught,
The Roman and the Dane,
The Saxon with his blue-eyed mate,
And then the Norman came.

Gazed fervent through the misty veil,
Which scarce the phantoms bore,
The awe-compelling eyes of gods—
The heathen gods of yore.

Woden, and Thor, and mighty Jove,
Full many a god beside,
Now dead, forgotten, lost to men,
With their own creeds they died.

And phantom fleets, and phantom hosts,
Renewed their former strife,
They made the torpid mist grow quick
With fierce and lurid life.

On sea and land, where'er the sun
Doth flash his golden spears,
Brave Englishmen have fought and died
A long two thousand years.

Their bones lie scattered o'er the earth,
And in the deep, dark sea,
Their requiem is the wind that blows,
The ocean's monody.

And visions came of chiefs who ruled
The nation in their time,
Whose souls were crucibles, where thoughts
Were fused to deeds sublime.

Keen visages of statesmen wise;
The poets' band elect;
And those who search out Nature's ways
With sharpest intellect.

And many another face and form,
The shadows of the great,
Who played their part in noble guise,
And moulded England's fate.

They shimmered past, a wondrous host,
Gone like the leaves of spring,
Yet as the tree doth, year by year,
Renew its bourgeoning,

So leaders new for ever rise
To guide the people's course,
Unceasingly fresh life doth stir
The nation with its force.

THE MESSENGER

Lo ! one from the tomb returning,
From the silence of the grave,
Saw again the Earth's green meadows,
And broad ocean's azure wave.

Felt the lustful joy of living,
Felt the coursing of the blood,
Stirring every vein and fibre
With the tingling of its flood.

Strange the longing and emotion
That perturbed the spirit when,
Sojourner in other regions,
He looked on the haunts of men.

And the thunder of his footsteps
Pealing sounded near and far,
Making every ear attentive
Like the rolling drum of war.

For his presence, clothed with wisdom,
Manifested novel power,
Gathered whither none had ever
Come to Earth before that hour.

And the rumour of his coming
  Roused the nations one and all,
Shook the heart of king and peasant
  With the wonder of its call.

As when ocean, calmly sleeping,
  Wakened by a sudden gale,
Heaves and tosses into billows,
  While the winds incessant wail,

So the secret fears that mingle
  With the hope that we may live
In the days of a hereafter
  When to death our frames we give,

Were dispersèd, and a tempest,
  Hurricane of strong desire,
Swept across the people's heartstrings,
  Swiftly as a prairie fire.

Every man and woman breathing,
  Whether rich or of mean sort,
Eager waited for the message
  From the realms of darkness brought;

Monarch seated in sage council
  With the wisest of the State,
Fashion flitting with light footstep
  Through the chambers of the great,

Merchant in his hall of commerce,
  Striving for redoubled gains,
And the manufacturer, toiling,
  Like the bee, with endless pains,

All surceased their work or pleasure,
None his daily labour sought,
For the world had but one feeling,
Every mind a single thought.

Armies plunged in throes of battle,
Swaying in its deadly tide,
Paused amid the strife and thunder,
Held in truce their martial pride.

Wondrous was the speech he uttered,
And the mighty words he said
Rent the veil that parts the living
From the regions of the dead.

THE CITY OF DREAMS

THERE is a city, built of men's bright dreams,
  Which they through many an æon have upreared,
Seen through the mists by fits and starts it gleams
  With phantom domes, and spires, and structures
    weird.
Here proud imaginations oft take form
  And fancies touched with passing wings of fire,
Embodiments of th' ecstatic storm
  That broke full oft from Orpheus' magic lyre.

Pacing its pleasant avenues are seen
  A folk unworn by arduous toil or care,
Life's orb is clothed with a perpetual sheen,
  The pulse throbs faster with th' inspiring air,
The faculties expand, and, like a flower
  That loves the sun but veils itself at night,
This folk is fostered by a quickening power,
  Joyous it lives, and revels in the light.

Lo ! here ascends the spire of many a fane,
  Great dome, and minaret, and pinnacle,
Temples whereby the pious may attain
  Communion with the dread invisible.
Holy the thoughts that nigh the altar rise,
  Holy the thoughts that well from sacred songs;
Before the presence of the godhead flies
  The lustful wish that breeds an obscene throng.

Perchance there comes, slow stealing through the mist,
Low bells of music, melancholy, sweet,
As if chaste sorrow and delight had kissed;
The Past approaches with its noiseless feet,
Laden with memories from their graves arise
The ghosts of old, forgotten days of yore,
Embers of vanished hopes burn in their eyes,
Ambitions crushed, lives lost for evermore.

The phantoms great of glory and of war
People the city with their faces proud,
Splendid they gleam, as some illustrious star
Supremely shines amidst the stellar crowd;
Bright hopes, and fierce ambitions, brave designs,
Each bears aloft its own victorious crest,
The banners flutter, flame the blazing signs,
Borne in the glad procession of the blest.

Awhile the city looms through golden mist
Where naught is clearly seen, but much obscure;
Shapes clad in robes of rose and amethyst,
Dim shadows undefined, that yet allure,
Move here and there, and many a glorious tone
With voice harmonious tells the listening ear
That Love is seated on her wondrous throne
Attended by her doves and Graces dear.

Confused the dreams of love, but all are blest,
With tender hopes and passion's colours shot,
A smiling sea by Zephyr's hand caressed,
Whose bosom heaves at its delightful lot;

THE CITY OF DREAMS

Dear images arise, then fade away,
  But leave the memory of a fragrant air,
These glowing visions fill the happy day
  With pleasures manifold and fancies rare.

The nations proud that ruled the ancient world,
  Th' Egyptian musing on death's shoreless sea,
The Assyrian fierce when war's red flag unfurled,
  Dread foe to meet, yet living sumptuously,
Here look on fabrics, idols of their dreams,
  Façades of palaces that daze the sense,
From which a glowing tide of splendour streams,
  Temples that breathe a god's magnificence.

About the city rolls a river wide
  Whose foaming waters none have dared to cross,
A terror vague hangs o'er the mighty tide—
  A ghostly river flushed with living force—
Its waters severance of two realms denote,
  For here our feet do rest upon the shore
Of stable land, but there strange visions float
  In regions that loom dim for evermore.

SHIPS

I

O SHIPS that ride with a freight of souls
On the ocean's barren plain
Swiftly ye pass, like the transient thoughts
That flit through the teeming brain!
The waves are cleft by your strenuous keels
But no trace is left behind,
Forgotten soon like the eagle's flight
Or sough of the angry wind.

Your shapes loom dim in the orient morn
Like the forms of phantoms weird
Coming from out of the sea's dark caves
Where manifold sprites are reared.
Then, quickened to life and energy
By the sight of the flaming sun,
The keels grow large, the sails defined,
Red sparks from the funnels run.

From the East and the West float the ships,
They come from the star-girt South,
From the gloom and the mists of the North,
From harbour and river mouth.
The whaler ploughs through the icy field
In quest of his monstrous prey,
Where the glaciers breed the glittering berg
And the sun is cold alway.

SHIPS

The Dyak sails where the spice-clad isles
The breezes with scents endow;
He braves the sea in a torrid clime
In his quaintly fashioned prau,
With its masts and yards of an Eastern mode
Ere the Western world held sway,
A lingering dream of a far-off past,
The ghost of an ancient day.

Thus ships have sailed during ages hoar
While the empires rose and fell;
The breeze that shook the Roman trireme
Rocked the Briton's coracle.
The ships are launched from a thousand ways
By the shipwright's art designed,
And they rush to meet the ocean wave
Like thoughts from a teeming mind.

II

Lo! when the sailor leaves the land
And to the ship confides his fate
He knows not when he shall again
Return to port, or soon or late.
Perchance the parting kiss he gave
To wife and child may be the last
He e'er shall give. A sailor's life
Is at the call of every blast;
The wonders of the deep are his,
The tempest and the glassy plain,
The dying sun, in splendour robed,
The moonbeams rippling o'er the main.

But on the glory rests a shade
  Proceeding from a subtle breath,
For aye beneath his feet there lies
  The danger of a watery death.

III

Ceaseless the struggle,
Bitter, unyielding,
'Twixt man and ocean,
Who shall be master.
Daily the vessels,
Great ship and tartane,
Galley and schooner,
Battered by tempest,
Caught by mis'venture,
Swift through the liquid
Hungry dark waters,
Satiate never,
Sink to the abysses
Where the huge monsters,
Misshapen, ugly,
Wander 'midst gloomy
Regions of horror
Far from the light of the sun and the world.
Yet men with labour,
Evermore toiling,
Still launch their warships
Clothed with dread thunder,
Steamers gigantic
Like to proud palaces
Haughtily floating
Upon a blue sea,

Kayak and whaler,
Barque and felucca,
Junk slowly sailing
Nigh realms of Cathay,
Where the seas grow dark
And the sky is hid
When the typhoon comes
With heart full of rage
And noise of great drums.
Everywhere round the
Rim of the ocean
Rings a shrill clamour,
Stirring commotion,
Made by the shipwrights,
Capable craftsmen,
Fashioning vessels
On many a plan.

IV

Plunging their strong prows
Through waves reluctant
Come the grey battleships;
Fiercely their cannon
Peer from the barbettes.
Stately and sternly,
Like mighty war-gods,
March they in column,
Dreadnought and cruiser,
Destroyer and scout,
Where the proud admiral,
Gallant old sea-dog,
Warworn and skilful,

Guides them, obeying
Flags flown as signals
From his great warship.
Soon shall their voices
Roar in deep thunder
And the dread levin
Break on the foe.

v

When the trireme spread to the sun,
To the Mediterranean sun,
Her silken sails,
With her gilded prow she clove the sea
Like a gay bird wafted graciously
By favouring gales.

The prætor she bore with his train
From Africa over the main
To Italy;
With garments of price his form was dressed
As he lay upon his wanton's breast
Voluptuously.

The zither was played and the lyre,
From their chords sprang a musical fire,
A glorious stave;
The sea was calm and the oars bit deep,
The slaves made the galley swiftly leap
From wave to wave.

In the depths beyond light of day,
Great Neptune held sovereign sway,
And the land
Was oft graced by some deity's tread
By the gleaming of Cupid's torch led
To fair hand.

The slave laboured hard at the oar,
Sad captive of merciless war,
Torn from his home
Where over the sand the Sphinx' wise face
Unceasingly watched the nomad race
For ages roam,

Or haply the dreams of his youth
Were dreamed on the banks of the Pruth,
Nigh forests wild,
And the maiden he loved when he grew
To a man was the maiden he knew
When a child.

The galley sped on with its freight,
The prætor reclining in state,
The slaves were below;
Pleasure was rife in the sunny noon,
It drank the beams of the risen moon,
Heedless of woe.

O vessels of Greece and of Rome
That sailed through the surge and the foam
In ages gone!
The Ægean and Euxine still roar,
Their waves upon many a shore
Fall forlorn,

But ye, like the transient clouds that fly
A moment o'er the azure sky,
Then pass for aye,
Have gone to realms of things unseen
Where wander the shades that have been
Once on a day.

VI

Lo ! the bells of the vessels chime
Throughout the long hours,
Chanting the progress of time,
Hours and half-hours.

Their clangour drifts over the sea
By night and by day,
Shrill-toned are their voices and free,
Heard far away.

When gleams the bright orb of the moon,
A shield in the sky,
Shedding a radiance like noon
But mellowly.

Softly lap the waves by the side
Of the sluggard ship,
Star-spangled the waters glide
Past with their rip.

Then the heart of the sailor, stirred
By thoughts of the days
When in his young childhood he heard
The church bells raise

Their silver-tongued voices aloud
  Like a holy peal
That mysteries of sacred ground
  Dimly reveal,

Grows soft, and forgets for a space
  How hard is his lot,
And a beam of ineffable grace
  Through his life is shot.

But when his long watch is fulfilled
  He goes to his rest,
With toil his emotions are chilled,
  Rugged his nest.

VII

The man who first obeyed the call,
  The calling of the mighty sea,
Who dared what fate might him befall
  While probing its deep mystery,
Was such an one the gods would deem
  Full worthy to become their peer,
No fibre of his soul was weak
  Or felt the trembling pulse of fear.

When on the ocean surge his bark
  With sails of antique shape outspread
Pursued an untried course and dark
  And drove the waves before its head,
He knew not what might be his fate,
  What novel peril might be met,
Some danger, undefined and great,
  That man had not encountered yet.

What mysteries did the ocean hold ?
  New lands, new peoples, gaunt and grim,
Two-headed giants, height untold,
  Or beings winged like seraphim.
Trees clothed with verdure strange and rare,
  Forests with novel creatures rife,
Fountains that bubbled to the air,
  Whose waters gave perpetual life.

Or did the ocean ever ope
  To mariners horizons new,
While overhead the sky's blue cope
  Aye limited the sailor's view ?
Was the sea but a watery plain
  Boundless save on the hither side,
And men could never hope to gain
  The margin of the ocean tide ?

VIII

Where sail the phantom fleets upon the main,
The ghosts of ships that floated on the main
  In ages gone ?
The ships and crews that o'er the pathless deep
Sailed full of pride where gleaming dolphins leap
  In seas forlorn ?

What secret sounds and silent havens hold
The squadrons from whose ports the thunders rolled
  In dreadful war ?
Or galleons that a wondrous silver freight
Once carried from the old Peruvian State
  To Spanish shore ?

SHIPS

A countless folk upon the ocean dwell
Who walk unseen upon the azure swell
With soundless feet.
Their spirits mingle with the storm-fed mist,
And when the ocean by the sun is kissed
Its love they greet.

The world grows old ; her frame is worn,
The beauty of her youthful face
Is lost ; the hills and forests mourn
The glory of her early grace ;
Yet still her form is clothed with light,
Advent'rous men new wonders reap,
Marvels once hid have come to light,
'Natheless some secrets it doth keep.

THE SONG OF THE SEA

O WONDERFUL Ocean, that girdles the land
With waves that are splendid and free,
Thy voices are chanting to many a strand
The deep hymn of Infinity!

Within thy proud bosom dwell harmonies strong,
The wisdom and secrets of Time,
The passion that seethes till it breaks into song,
The march of a soul-stirring rhyme.

Thy moods and thy temper most varied, O Sea!
Each day has its fashion and change;
From the calm that befalls where the tropic suns be
To the death-bearing tempest they range.

The depths of thy waters are filled with strange life,
Most fruitful and rich is thy store
Of creatures that revel where treasures are rife
On thy rugged and rocky floor.

The albatross floats, with its broad, ashen wing,
And its bosom of snowy white,
In the air, and looks down like an eldritch thing
On thy glimmering waters bright.

THE SONG OF THE SEA

Deep solitude broods o'er thy uttermost fields,
Where the keel of no ship doth plough,
And the sea-serpents rove with their glist'ring shields
While the breezes softly sough.

The storm mist that over thy tempest-racked breast
In dim, fleecy volumes oft rolls,
Bears phantoms aroused from their unquiet rest,
The phantoms of mariners' souls.

In life they were bound with the gyves that bind well,
The gyves that are welded by thee;
In death they remember thy charms and thy spell,
So great is thy power, O Sea!

Thy beauties are many, and all are thy own,
Eternal thy freshness and youth;
Unchanged since the day when the sunbeams first shone
On the Earth in their splendour and ruth.

Thy surges are flushed with the light that descends,
Raining down from a golden sky,
And the flame of its fire with thy azure blends
In a colour-wove symphony.

And thy great heart throbs when the silent moon
From its silvery throne doth smile,
And there rolls the sheen of the glorious boon
O'er many a watery mile.

When the tempest comes with the sound of the drums
That herald the armies whose feet
Tread the cloud-capped realms where the monsoon hums
Ere it scatters the flying fleet,

THE SONG OF THE SEA

Thy billows are torn with the swords that are born
When the winds gather angrily;
Their bodies are clothed with the robe of thy scorn,
Thy flash and thy foam, O Sea!

Could thy language be changed to the modes of speech
That are known to our human ears,
What tales couldst thou tell of the ages that reach
Down the immemorial years!

What deeds of devotion and courage that drew
New strength from the portals of death,
And Love that was bold when the hour darkest grew,
And yielded its ultimate breath!

To thy rhythm and rhyme the Earth keepeth time,
Thy soul is the soul of the moon;
Thou greetest the morn with thy resonant chime,
The swell of a magnific tune.

O Sea, that was old ere mankind was begot,
Or the land had borne ever a tree,
Thy waters shall roll when the sun is not,
Great type of Infinity!

THE SEAGULL

CHILD of the tempest! rocked in the deep,
Thy birthplace the rude crag o'erlooking the foam,
The wild winds that over the broad ocean sweep
Hummed a lullaby weird round thy storm-beaten home.

Though ashen thy pinions, yet white is thy breast,
Thy plumage unruffled amid the dread blast,
Thou sittest serene on the high surge's crest,
And borne by the billows art here and there cast.

Thy voice hoarse and mournful sounds like the sad wail
Of spirits forgotten by quick and by dead,
Who aimlessly wander within a sad pale
And dream of their joys in the life that has fled.

When far from the land, with strong beating pinion,
Thou sailest and musest athwart the blue main,
Thy eye view'st afar the Sun's rich dominion
Where robed in the splendours of light he doth reign.

And lo! in the waste of untravelled water
Thou see'st the fierce kraken emerge from his lair,
His pitiless arms stretched out for the slaughter,
His cold gleaming eyeballs with cruelty glare.

And sometimes appears the king of the ocean
His huge body cleaving the blue waves asunder,
The noise of his flukes, the roar of his motion,
Resound like the peal of the echoing thunder.

And when the moon hangs its pale lamp in the sky
Thou sleepest deep sleep on thy watery bed,
The desolate spirits glide wearily by,
About thee a glittering radiance is shed.

Thy voice is not tuned to the lay which is heard
On the forest's green marge or in the cool grove,
The sweet notes which spring from the soul of the bird
Land begotten, land nurtured, impassioned by love.

Thy life is the life of the measureless sea,
Thy voice is the voice of the sad homeless wind
That courses unseen over mountain and lea,
And halts not, nor slumbers, nor rest can e'er find.

O heir of long ages ! whose ancestors flew
O'er surf-girdled seas which lost continents laved,
Where strange-fashioned verdure in strange meadows grew,
And o'er creatures uncouth the giant palm waved.

Borne hither and thither on intrepid wings,
The dark, barren ocean lies aye 'neath thy ken,
Thou hearest the Siren's clear song when she sings,
And dwellest apart from the kingdom of men.

THE WARSHIP

STRONG springs the noble warship through the sea,
About her prow the surges break and comb,
The great waves beat her sides exultingly,
Behind her spreads a sheet of silver foam ;
She moves along, a citadel of might,
Her country's glory and her crew's delight.

Upon her decks, disposed in dread array,
The silent cannon in the sunlight gleam,
The crew, alert, their captain's call obey,
And with blithe zeal and warlike ardour teem ;
The fell torpedo, hidden, lurks below,
The sure and swift-winged messenger of woe.

The ship's majestic heart doth throb and beat
With deep pulsations, keeping rhythmic time,
A force resistless as Death's coming feat
Impels the mighty fabric through the brine.
A potent genie, in its prison bound,
Through night and day doth toil in constant round.

A thousand men, by labours well controlled,
A skilful work and wondrous did create,
Their souls commingling in a common mould
Imbued with life a thing inanimate,
They raised a fabric like a splendid dream,
Where steel and brass-bound cylinders did gleam.

THE WARSHIP

The rugged iron within the furnace cast
By flames of fiercest temper was enwrapped,
It wallowed there till many hours had passed,
And then the glowing reservoir was tapped;
The molten metal sudden flashed to sight,
A brilliant, blinding, incandescent light.

The great machines, as if with life endowed,
Seized on the tempered steel with forceful hands,
And shaped the rod, the smooth plate bent and bowed,
Obedient to their master's mute commands.
Swift fell the hammer, gliding in its frame,
And from the lurid plate drove forth the flame.

Toil on, O artisans! and spend your skill
In fullest measure on the work which grows
Beneath your hands; for, lo! your labours will
Control the warship's fate when fiercely blows
The tempest o'er the ocean's watery plain,
Or battle's thunder peals across the main.

At last the labour's o'er, the ship complete,
And proudly beat the workmen's hearts, and high,
As the wild surges their new mistress greet,
Clad in her martial panoply.
Far from the land, where swell the billows free,
The warship seeks her royal destiny.

From out the waters deep tumultuous rise
The spirits of the brave, immortal, dead,
With wonder gleaming from their starlit eyes,
The light of Aidenn round about them shed.
Awhile they view the prodigy of art,
Then, silent, to their unseen home depart.

THE WARSHIP

Majestic symbol of embodied power,
  Sublime thou rid'st the waves, from crest to crest,
Man fashioned thee in some inspirèd hour,
  All forces shaping to his own behest.
    O warship proud, be ruler of the sea,
    And bear my country's flag to victory!

THE SEA REMEMBERS NOT

THE sea remembers not,
Nor heeds the footsteps of the morning light,
Nor yet the coming of the star-clad night,
Vainly the sun and moon pursue their ways,
The ocean's breast is careless of their rays.

The sea remembers not,
Swift through its waves the giant steamships plough,
Winged furrows ope before the eager bow,
The waters foam awhile, but in brief time
The waves are beating in their ancient rhyme.

The sea remembers not,
It keeps no memories of the lives it flung
To death's dark shades when by the storm-winds stung
It cast the shuddering vessel like a weed
Against the rocks that on poor mortals feed.

The sea remembers not
The royal courts that sovereign Neptune held
Beneath its surges in the days of eld,
Nor proud processions, when the god was borne
In pearl-clad chariot, and the sounding horn
Of Triton bade the watery world acclaim
The monarch who ruled o'er the boundless main.

THE SEA REMEMBERS NOT

The sea remembers not
The untold years that passed ere man took life,
When ocean was with many a monster rife,
The world was in the making, and the sea
Was quivering with the creatures that would be.

The sea remembers not
That once it looked upon a silent land
Where meagre herb scarce hid the rugged strand,
No roar of beast or human voice was heard,
Nor trills proceeding from the joyful bird.

The sea remembers not,
It keeps no record of the sobs and sighs,
The tears that issue from the saddened eyes,
Heart bidding long good-bye to loving heart
When call of ocean bids them quickly part.

The sea remembers not,
Fame rears no column on its azure plain,
The mightiest deed no trophy here doth gain,
The battle's smoke obscures the ocean's face
A moment, then dispersing leaves no trace.

The sea remembers not,
Like Time it is, and was, and still will be.
Watched by the sun its surges changelessly
With crested helmets wander to and fro
Just as they did ten thousand years ago.

THE PHANTOM SHIP

The sea mists gathered thick and fast,
They clung about the vessel's mast;
The sails flapped idly overhead
And from the slackened ropes was shed
A frequent shower of briny dew
Upon the mariner, whose view
Scarce reached beyond the vessel's side,
So dense the cloud on ocean's tide.

Not distant lay the Cape of Storms
Whose rugged promontory forms
The boundary 'twixt two oceans vast,
Whose tempest-shaken ramparts passed
The sailor glides, o'er the sea's breast,
From West to East, or East to West,
Approaches now the rising sun
Or sees it sink when day is done.

Why cleaves the sullen mist in twain?
Why tosses now the silent main?
Whence comes that strange and ghostly light
That makes the sea gleam cold and white?
Athwart the sunless avenue
An ancient ship glides into view;
Her battered hull the sailor sees
Worn by the storms of centuries.

THE PHANTOM SHIP

Her sails are old, her cordage worn
In rotten fragments hangs forlorn ;
Her boats are wrecks, her bows look fell
With kelp and rugged barnacle ;
She rides before a soundless gale,
And round about her fly and wail
The sea-fowl in whose guise are found
The spirits of poor seamen drowned.

" What ho, the ship ! " the captain cried,
" What phantom sea is this you ride ?
What men are you ? from what strange clime
Hails your strange bark, hoary with time ? "
Loud was his voice, but full of fear,
His brave heart felt a presence near
That, with supernal wonder fraught,
All human courage rendered naught.

Then, slowly rising fore and aft,
A crew stood on the battered craft ;
They wore the shapes of mortal men,
Yet something novel to the ken
Betokened that a hapless fate
Had severed them from human state ;
Between two worlds their lot was cast,
The Present mingling with the Past.

The vessel rolled 'mid billows high,
As its weird master made reply :
" O mortal seaman, you behold
One who in far-off days of old
By weeks of tempests sore oppressed,
The ship rebuffed from crest to crest,

In weary struggles vainly strove
To round the Cape which looms above

"The Southern Ocean, where it breaks
Upon the Afric coast and shakes
Its snowy surfs upon the shore
And frights the land with muffled roar,
Until my frenzied anger burst
Into fell language, most accursed,
And in my utter madness I
Did Heaven and its own God defy

"To keep me from my chosen course
By tempest, or supernal force.
My wicked frenzy seized the men,
Who lustily cried out 'Amen!'

"And never since have we dropped down
Our anchor by a seaport town,
Nor seen the face of wife or child,
Nor felt the breath of zephyr mild;
Reft from the lot of humankind,
And driven by a soundless wind,
We roam the ocean's solitude
And feel the tempest's fiercest mood.

"We know not when this doom shall cease,
Nor when our souls may taste sweet peace,
Nor whether we now live or die,
Nor what may be our destiny."

The phantom spake no more: and lo!
The dense mists hurried to and fro;

Till, rolling swiftly from the scene,
They left exposed the blue marine.
The sun shone in a cloudless sky,
The little waves danced merrily,
But every sailor said a prayer
For those whom that dread bark did bear.

THE CHAMBERS OF THE SEA

When slowly roaming on the shore
Where clangs the seabird's raucous cry,
I ponder much what treasures may
Illumine with their radiancy
The chambers of the sea.

For once I heard a voice that spake
Like one who utters things unknown,
Winged words that made me burn to view
And traverse by myself alone
The chambers of the sea:

"Ten thousand fathoms deep a host
Of living creatures move and flame,
Attendants they of palaces
Whose splendour puts the sun to shame,
The chambers of the sea.

"Here dwell in grandeur mighty kings
Whose realms all earthly bounds transcend,
Their retinues in sumptuous dight
A glory most exceeding lend
To chambers of the sea.

"And creatures strange of shape and mien,
Whose onset much a man would rue,
Watch ceaselessly with flaming eyes
The avenues that lead unto
The chambers of the sea.

THE CHAMBERS OF THE SEA

"Nor night nor day is there, but, lo!
A lustre full of life and zeal
Moves tremulously to and fro,
Whose flashings like a veil conceal
The chambers of the sea.

"Chimeras weird that float with wings
And cloud the waters of the deep
Drift past, like things of eerie birth
That from some sombre region creep,
The chambers of the sea.

"Strange is the fashion of this world
Spread out beneath the ocean's din,
That rises at the tempest's call,
Sometimes an echo enters in
The chambers of the sea.

"Rich chords of music oft resound
Throughout the waters when they break
Softly and noiseless as a cloud
And with melodious tremors shake
The chambers of the sea.

"Half melancholy is the strain
As if some fervid mind and true
By Nature's mysteries oppressed
Had mused on them while roaming through
The chambers of the sea.

"The ocean's harmonies are there,
The essence of its noble soul,
The music of the ages makes
A surge of sound tumultuous roll
Through chambers of the sea.

"Commingled with its waters dwell
The spirits of the bold and brave
Whose bodies overcome by fate
Sank helplessly beneath the wave
Into the angry sea.

"And gay flowers bloom that ne'er were kissed
By the uprising, ruddy sun,
Whose giant petals gleam with hues
Splendid as if they had been won
From chambers of the sea.

"Vast meadows clothed with herbage green,
Profusely growing, rich and rank—
Where flaming serpents softly glide
Amongst the bright fronds sleek and lank—
Carpet the deep, deep sea.

"O'er regions measureless and wild
Lonely is spread a scattered rout
Of galleons and all precious things,
The spoil of empires lies about
The chambers of the sea.

"Full many a work of art is there,
Achievements of some godlike brain;
Forlorn their beauty shall expire
Nor be enjoyed by man again,
Lost in the mighty sea.

"The echo of the wondrous chords
That in the depths of ocean dwell
Ofttimes delights the listening ear
That seeks the winding, sculptured shell
Drawn from the ancient sea.

THE CHAMBERS OF THE SEA

"A pleasant murmur dimly haunts
The mazes of the pearled recess
That seems, thus filled with sound forlorn,
Of vague, sonorous dreaminess,
A chamber of the sea."

Oh could we by the spirit rapt
Discard the body for a space
To roam the ocean's abysses,
And through its untrod regions trace
The chambers of the sea,

How thought would quicken thought till all
The visions of the soul were born;
Issuing forth, tumultuously,
Like troops of mystic creatures drawn
From chambers of the sea!

THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA

I HEAR strange voices calling from the deep,
Strange voices never heard by man before,
In silence of the night they faintly creep
Into my window with the breakers' roar:

"We are the people who dwell in the sea,
'Neath the swishing and the plash of its foam,
Whom no man hath seen, or ever shall see,
For during the day deep waters we roam.

"But when of the night the pinions are spread,
And the lustrous gems of its baldric shine,
By a strong desire to the surface led
We walk with delight on the trembling brine.

"Wild passions are born in the human breast
And flush it with joy, or rack it with woe,
But we in the peace of the noontide rest,
Nor rapture, nor sorrow, nor anguish know.

"We are the people who dwell in the sea,
'Neath the swishing and the plash of its foam,
Whom no man hath seen, or ever shall see,
For the ocean conceals our emerald home."

Thus call the voices, and their music thrills
  And rings through every fibre of my brain,
Awakening strange longings, while it fills
  Me with a pleasure melting into pain.

THE FATED SHIP

'Twas a ship that sailed with a favouring wind
Through the loom of the Southern sea,
From its funnel a smoky pennant trailed
To the eastward, steadily.

The dolphins disported about its prow
In their jackets of green and gold,
While the blue waves passed with their silver crests
As they did in the days of old.

Like a bird on the wing that fearless flies
It steadfastly sailed on its way
From a noble port in the Austral land
To the haven of Plymouth Bay.

Yet each fish that swam nigh the vessel's course
Knew the hour of its doom was sealed,
The seagull hovered; to its inward sight
The fate of the ship was revealed.

Heavy hearts grew light on the brave craft's deck
With the cheer of the sun and the foam,
And the pleasant dreams of the joys in store
When they should reach their English home.

THE FATED SHIP

The hopes of the folk on the ship were linked
To the hopes of their kin on shore,
Thought leaps unto thought and affection's bond
Endureth for evermore.

As the vessel sprang with its freight of souls
Full of pride o'er the boundless deep,
The spirits that from the ocean arose
At its gliding shape did peep.

Sweet spirits and kind, dark spirits and dour,
In the lore of the future wise,
And they felt the presence of death remote
By their matchless sympathies.

The stars of the night from ebony thrones
Saw the great ship speeding on,
The Sisters Seven in their shining robes,
And the sentries of Orion.

The planets that reigned in the lofty sky
When the voyagers' lives were born
Gave a dimmer light, and their lustre paled
As it pales at the rising morn.

Each mortal is part of a noble scheme
That renders the stars and the suns
The fellows of man, the beast, and the bird,
And the humblest creature that runs.

From the frozen South whence the keen winds come
In their mantles of fleecy snow,
Where the penguins quaint o'er the icy fields
In the springtide wandering go,

THE FATED SHIP

Like creeping ghosts from the verge of the world
The icebergs approached through the gloom,
Their shapeless forms, with a menace dread,
'Midst the clouds and the mists 'gan loom.

Dread warships they of the monarch who reigns
O'er the realms of the Southern Pole,
Whose palace is lit by the splendid flames
That from th' Aurora roll.

The craft steamed free, and the music of mirth
Oft enlivened its rich saloon,
For none ever deemed that its end was nigh
Or offered an orison.

Oh kind is the fate that hides from our ken
The manner of death we shall die,
The hour when the soul taking wing from its clay
Shall travel new destiny!

Unheard was the cry that affrighted the night,
The cry of poor mortals in pain,
By the kindred folk who counted the hours
Till loved friends should meet again.

SONGS OF THE MOON

I

From the spaces remote,
The ultimate sky,
Where the spirits divine
On languid wings fly,
Comes forth the moon proudly,
The empress of night,
Her orbed shield diffusing
Rich floods of pure light.
The sheen of its brightness
In quiet waves falls
On Earth's noble cities,
Towers, palaces, halls.
Clothed thus in calm splendour,
These strong fabrics seem
The gossamer fancies
Of some happy dream.

Its beams soft and silent,
Descending from high,
Bearing down to the world
Some balm of the sky,
To hearts sad and weary
A sweet solace bring,
Alike in its favours
To peasant and king.

Oft through the long ages
The moon's lucid sphere
Has lit up the vista
Where raptures appear
To eyes of fond lovers
Who roam there alone,
Unmindful, regardless,
Of thoughts not their own.

II

On the hamlets that sleep,
Whose sleepers care not
For the years that pass by,
Nor better their lot;
On the fields where the corn,
The fruit of the plough,
Bends rustling as o'er it
The warm breezes sough,

On the vineyards whose spoil,
Plucked ripe from the vine,
Gushing out from the press
Distils the rich wine,
The luminous radiance
Sinks gently to rest;
By the smile of the moon
All these are made blest.

III

'Mongst the lace of the trees
The full moonlight breaks,
Falling thick on the ground
In luminous flakes;

Its fires soft and mellow
  Gleam wanly and white,
Enticing to music
  The birds of the night.
Weird shadows and loomings,
  Dim shapes undefined,
Are born in the forest,
  Perturbing the mind
Of wayfarer wandering,
  By grim darkness caught,
Down alley and dell
  Where wild dryads sport.
On the moss-covered root
  The glowworm sits low,
And his little red lamp
  Gives forth a dull glow;
While through the dark boscage
  Flashes the firefly,
Rapid the vision of
  Sparklets flitting by.
In the broad open space
  Where the oak branches low
The moonbeams are gathered,
  And there, rippling slow,
The rivulet murmurs
  The tales that it heard
When by the young forest
  The soil was first stirred;
Then soon the green glory
  Rose up in its might,
And the world, flushed with gladness,
  Rejoiced at the sight.

IV

The snow spreads its mantle
White, fleecy, and cold,
O'er copse and o'er forest,
O'er meadow and wold;
Through the frosty air fall
Wanly the moon rays,
Like phantoms that flit down
Impalpable ways.
The people walk softly
Upon the pure snow,
Their feet move in silence
As onward they go.

V

Near looms the horizon
Fringing the desert
When from the depths sailing
The moon from the skirt
Of the world rises ruddy,
Full-orbed and splendid—
The night's noble monarch
With planets attended.
From his cave the great lion
Emerges grimly,
With blood-lust enkindled
His eyeballs gleam fiercely.

Far over the drear waste
His voice thunders dread,
The frightened deer shivers,
Clings close to its bed;

Then from the cold relics
That once were a fane,
Standing magnificent
Upon a rich plain,
Stalks forth a proud creature,
His tawny-skinned mate.
Majestic towards her
He marches elate,
From his couch in the tent
The nomad springs armed,
Glancing round with keen eye,
Watchful, not alarmed.
In highest heaven hangs
The sky's jewelled cope,
And between the bright spheres
Infinitudes ope :
'Tis the book of the stars
In whose mystic page
Man's fortunes were read by
The Chaldæan sage.
And the desert breeze stirs
The Bedouin's fierce soul,
Through its cavernous depths
The hot passions roll ;
While the sounds that he hears,
Wild, thrilling, and stern,
Fan the flames that within
His martial heart burn.

VI

Dark clouds o'er the crescent
That sits in the sky

Glide slowly and hide it
A space from the eye.
It looks on a region
Where the streams flow red,
Like leaves that are fallen
The soldiers lie dead.
The din of the battle
Still hangs in the wind,
The lingering presence
That war leaves behind ;
The ghoul birds are searching
For morsels obscene,
And the robbers who steal
From dead warriors are seen
Like grim shadows gliding
Now here and now there,
They taint with their being
The nocturnal air.
The clouds through deep fissures
Reveal the bright stars,
Low on the horizon
Gleams ruddy-hued Mars.

VII

Where the snow-vestured peaks
Of huge mountains hoar
Through a rarefied air
Majestically soar,
While the forest's dark robe
Flows over the feet
Of the ranges, and makes
A leafy retreat,

There sits the white moonlight,
  Pale, holy, serene,
With dreams of devoutness
  Suffusing the scene.
The cries of strange creatures,
  The denizens here,
Have never descended
  Upon human ear;
The kingdom of Nature
  Spreads out undefiled,
Untraversed by man,
  Untrodden the wild.
The moon from her chariot,
  Through the ether whirled,
Looks down on a rugged,
  A virginal world;
Flitting phantoms she sees,
  The vague, moving shapes
Of the creatures that lived,
  The tigers and apes,
The forms that were fashioned
  In Nature's prime mould,
From her bountiful force
  Ere the world grew old.

VIII

O moonlight abounding,
  Whose clear radiance laves
With silvery splendour
  The crests of the waves,
The Earth's flashing waters,
  Lakes, rivulets, streams,

Gain tremulous beauty
  Beneath thy soft beams;
The cataract thunders
  Amidst the spray mist
Adown the steep ravine
  Where oft it is kissed
By thee, when dark masses
  Of clouds are withdrawn
And thy brightness is shed forth
  Like wine from a horn.

Deep down in the ocean
  Thy soft glory falls
Until it illumines
  The Nereid's halls,
Caverns, and palaces,
  The homes of sea kings,
Where move the dim shades of
  Unspeakable things;
The waters about them
  Suffused with thy sheen
Become a liquescent
  Illustrious scene,
Displaying a mellow
  Strange lustre to eyes
That look from Earth's regions
  On blue-vaulted skies.

O mild light unchanging,
  Untarnished by years,
Thou sheddest a pure flood
  O'er all that appears

When from her couch rising
  The moon walks serene
Amid the proud planets
  Of heaven the queen!
Plains, mountains, and valleys
  Are washed with the foam,
The bubblings that well from
  Her crystalline home.

THE SONG OF THE SUN

From the caverns of dark night,
Clothed with red and amber light,
In resplendent garments dight,
Comes the Sun.

Warmth, and gaiety, and love
From his burning chariot move,
From the azure realms above,
From the Sun.

Flush the trees with sudden green,
On the water lies a sheen
Where the little waves are seen
By the Sun.

All the flowers their pretty eyes
Open wide in sweet surprise
When they hear the amorous sighs
Of the Sun.

Seated in his rustic wain
Trolls the waggoner his strain
When his drowsy eye again
Sees the Sun.

THE SONG OF THE SUN

Every bird with spirit gay
Joyous pipes its pleasant lay,
Hails the ruler of the day,
Hails the Sun.

And the cattle in the lea
Crop the pastures lustily
When from slumber's chains set free
By the Sun.

Flitting by on painted wings,
Choicest of created things,
Flames the butterfly, and springs
In the Sun.

All the merry insect tribe
Swarms about the country-side,
Filled with life which they imbibe
From the Sun.

And the lover's heart beats high
As he sees the festal sky
Flooded with the beams that fly
From the Sun.

For the comforts of sweet hope
With his fears and doubtings cope
When the golden lances slope
From the Sun.

Wakes the maiden from her dreams,
Roused from slumber by the gleams,
By the warm and ruddy beams,
Of the Sun.

THE SONG OF THE SUN

Joyful breaks her bridal day,
Through her breast sweet fancies stray
Like the motes that idly play
In the Sun.

Then from out the rosy morn
Lustrous noontide hours are born,
Flakes of beauty that are torn
From the Sun.

Softly falls the saffron rain
Sliding through the aery main,
To the world a glorious gain
From the Sun.

Palpitates the Earth's cold breast,
Beating with a fuller zest,
By the ardent rays caressed
Of the Sun.

Splendid through the summer hours
Blooms the carpet of rich flowers,
Breathing fragrance from the dowers
Of the Sun.

From his horn of plenty shed
Blessings o'er the world are spread,
And the Earth to sky is wed
By the Sun.

THE STARS

O STARS, that shed your placid light
  Upon the world that lies below,
When night its sombre mantle spreads
  And spirits wander to and fro!

Men pass like leaves, but ye shine on
  In changeless beauty through the years;
Age follows age, but still the same
  Light glistens from your lustrous spheres.

Time lessens not your chastened fires,
  What ye are now so were ye when
The Earth, full wearied of the beast,
  Began to be the home of men.

Your beams fell softly on the Nile
  Ere yet the Shepherd Kings were born,
Before the Pyramids had shape,
  When Egypt was a land forlorn,

When from the shrine where Isis dwelt
  The priest with quickened pulses came,
His rapt soul filled with ecstasy,
  A frenzy shaking his gaunt frame.

He saw your beacons shining clear,
The hallowed splendour of the moon,
The columns of the temple laved
With radiance like a silver noon.

And, lo ! the soft, celestial rays
Bedewed his wild, enraptured soul,
And from its dim recesses deep
The fev'rous mists began to roll.

Strange visions of a nobler faith—
A God who dwelt not in the fane,
Who lusted not for streams of blood,
Nor cared for sacrifices vain—

Grew manifest to inward sight,
And sudden came the thought—" Perchance
My creed is but an empty sherd
Fashioned by craft and ignorance."

O stars ! ye glittered brightly when
The old Chaldæans sought the lore
Which he who gains shall hold the key
That opens Nature's secret door.

And glittered, too, when your chaste eyes
Looked down reproachfully upon
The riot in the palaces
And wanton halls of Babylon.

And when the Christ, of woman born,
With manhood clothed His form divine,
Your lamps illumed the heavenly vault,
And made the sinful world a shrine.

THE STARS

Unnumbered peoples ye have seen
To flourish in their little day,
Then pass unto an unknown bourne—
The Greek, the Roman, where are they?

Man, torn by passion and desire,
Linked to the Earth by unseen chains,
Scarce lifts his eyes to where afar
The splendour of the midnight reigns.

There seraph unto seraph calls
Their voices on the ether swim,
And blessed souls together talk,
Companions of the cherubim.

Shine on, O stars, and may your light
In soothing floods our souls immerse;
Shine on, till man has left the Earth
Ye torches of the Universe!

THE WINDS

O WINDS that scourge the hollow deep,
O winds that o'er the broad lands sweep,
What life within you makes you strong,
Or sometimes sings a tender song ?

Your mighty hands the great oaks shake,
At your fierce cries the billows quake,
The lion shrinks within his lair
When o'er the plain your fleet steeds tear.

And yet full oft, in summer hours,
Transporting scent of fragrant flowers
On fairy pinions, moving slow,
Softly you come, and softly go.

Invisible to mortal sight,
Your forms ne'er showing in the light—
If shapes you have, for who can tell
What unseen presences may dwell

Within Creation's vast domain
Upon whose marge we roam and gain
An inkling of what it enfolds,
The secret treasures that it holds ?

THE WINDS

Lonely you wander, seeking rest
Upon the Earth's reluctant breast,
But goaded by a spur that stings
Ceaseless you move your weary wings.

Companions of poor man since he
First entered on his destiny,
Your voices over old and young
Full many a requiem have sung.

Full oft have you heard lovers' sighs,
Full often battle's dreadful cries,
The soughings of the breezy gale
Have mingled with the mourners' wail.

Changeful you are, and yet the same
As when at even Adam came
With Eve to walk in Eden's groves
Where they rejoicing told their loves.

And you shall list, in days to come,
Unto the ever-murmuring hum
Of myriads marching with slow feet
Unto the drums of Life's dull beat.

Appanage of this terrene globe
You cling about it like a robe,
Nor will you leave it for a day
Until its life has passed away.

THE COMET

(May, 1901)

WHAT orb is this that sheds a distant glory
And cleaves the sky with silver falchions twain,*
Now to the East proclaiming its strange story,
Now to the West recounting it again ?

From hidden depths of darkest space emerging,
A vision splendid in the sombre night,
Where wild the ether's soundless waves are surging
Its presence gleams, and captivates the sight.

Is it the chariot of an angel flying
In strenuous quest of some bright goddess dear
Who, driven by the force of love undying,
Has wandered errant from her proper sphere ?

Are these majestic beams which pierce the darkness
That fills the spacious void 'twixt star and star
The messengers sent forth to search the vastness
And hale the goddess to the heavenly bar ?

Or is it but the stirring of the forces
That move and thrill the cosmic region lorn
When from its depths, to run their fateful courses,
The flaming suns and placid moons are born ?

* This comet, as seen from New Zealand, had two tails.

THE COMET

A sign and token to the wondering nations
The comet looms, a ghostly thing and strange,
Amid the planets and the constellations
The visitant in mystic garb doth range.

Low down the western sky its swords hang nightly,
And swiftly speeding on its unknown quest
It seeks the firmament where glitters brightly
The jewelled belt 'neath great Orion's breast.

And night by night more feeble grows its splendour,
And night by night the omen wanes and wanes,
The lustre of its glaives grows faint and tender,
As it the steep and higher sky attains.

Its wings of light melt in the distant spaces
Like hopes that cheer awhile, then fade away,
Deep in the ebon vault appear its traces
Till they grow dim and vanish ray by ray.

. . . . . .

Oh whither art thou gone, thou thing of wonder,
To what untravelled region hast thou sped ?
Wilt thou again the heavens burst asunder
And o'er the Earth thy swords' bright radiance shed ?

Or wilt thou not return to this dominion
But wander age by age amongst the spheres
And light with thy soft flames the far empyrean
Till Time shall pass and Death destroy the years ?

THE WORLD OUR HOME

THIS is our home—this world of ours,
With all its pleasures, all its pains,
Its many losses, many gains,
Long days of grief, delightful hours.

Rich the joy by love begotten,
Heart bequeathing in full measure
To another heart its treasure,
Every care in bliss forgotten.

Earth has varied charms and wondrous,
For the seraph at its making,
His immortal pinions shaking,
Gave his choicest gifts to us.

Rivers, meadows, valleys, mountains,
Rocky caverns sometimes hiding,
'Mid their rugged hollows biding,
Bubbling, cool, translucent fountains.

Forests ancient, shaggy, glorious,
Dim their alleys and recesses
Where the fern trees fling their tresses
Over little brooks uproarious.

Roofed with azure is our dwelling,
And the sunlight glows and shimmers
Shooting radiance from its quivers
From the crystal concave welling.

Fleecy is the angels' raiment
Softly borne upon the ether,
Floating here and there together,
Trailing o'er the firmament.

And the night reveals the glory
Flooding the celestial nations,
Moon, and stars, and constellations,
Telling truths in allegory.

Rich their mansions, fretted, golden,
But the splendour of their portals
Lies beyond the ken of mortals,
Man has never them beholden.

Our keenest thought is but a guess—
What kind of folk in these bright spheres
May keep the tale of passing years,
And count the time to nothingness.

Their destinies are not our own;
What griefs, if any, dim their state,
What joys their lot alleviate,
Belong unto themselves alone.

Could we be rapt, on wings of might,
To some clear star, that shines undimmed,
Its image on the darkness limned,
An orb of tender, shining light,

Reluctant would our weary feet
  Walk vainly in a foreign land,
  Where none would take us by the hand
Or friendly voice our presence greet.

For 'tis the need of humankind
  To seek the voice of sympathy
  That brings the light into the eye
And stirs the pulses of the mind.

Much should we long for living things
  That walk or fly, in varied guise,
  Their dumb souls gleaming through their eyes,
While to their lives the base clod clings.

We all are linked by secret chains
  To every creature, great and small,
  That dwells upon this earthly ball,
Where life in many phases reigns.

The insect crawls its little span,
  Thinking alone of sensual needs,
  Dull as the leaf on which it feeds,
And yet it is akin to man.

Restrained by unseen bonds that mark
  The limits of our destiny,
  Vainly we struggle to be free
And reach the light from out the dark.

But sometimes we may chance to hear
  Amid the storm and rack of thought
  Rich strains with novel meaning fraught,
The hymnings of a nobler sphere.

BLOW SOFT, YE WINDS

Blow soft, ye winds, blow soft and low,
And waft my true love back to me,
For he comes from a distant shore,
And sails upon the broad, blue sea.

Blow soft, ye winds, nor rudely strain
The ship that bears my true love home,
For he returns with famished heart,
And never more from me will roam.

Ye seabirds who, with stately wing,
Pursue the ship in circles wide,
Be guardians of my true love now
He comes to claim me for his bride.

Ye sea nymphs gay, with joyous mien,
Disporting in the azure deep,
Pray Neptune bid the gales forbear
To rouse the waters from their sleep.

Blow soft, ye winds, blow soft and low,
Sweet music is your voice to me;
I hear, amid its rustling chords,
The tones that I love tenderly.

BLOW SOFT, YE WINDS

Speed on, O hours, grow short apace,
  And let the days roll quickly by,
Let sun, and moon, and glowing stars,
  More swiftly on their courses fly.

I see the gleaming of the waves
  Beneath the fiery sun at noon;
The trembling of the silver road
  Illumined by the tender moon;

Clothed with the light of sun and moon
  The vessel breasts the boundless sea,
Before its prow the surges break
  And spread their plashings merrily.

Rich are the murmurs that I hear
  Each moment borne across the main;
The air grows full of love and life,
  And stirs with happiness again.

Blow soft, ye winds, yet linger not,
  Nor cease to ruffle Ocean's tide,
Fair be the breathings that ye breathe,
  And bring my true love to my side.

THE ISLAND IN THE SEA

One day we went a sailing o'er a sunlit sea,
Our bark, as light as were our hearts, sailed merrily,
The wavelets lapped and laved its sides caressingly.

All through the summer morn, until high noon, the fragrant zephyr blew,
We heard its breathings soft and low, we felt its touch, we two ;
It sang to us a tender song, whose melody we knew.

We saw the seabirds float along, the seabirds white and grey ;
Anon the albatross stole down, anon he sailed away
Unto his kingdom lone, where he doth dwell in peace alway.

We thought no more of hearth and home, we dreamed but of the sea,
Of all the strange and wondrous things that in its depths might be—
The Mermaiden, and Nereids, and proud Amphitrite ;

THE ISLAND IN THE SEA

The sunless city 'neath the waves, its name to man unknown,
Where sea-sprites dwell, and Nereus, and Neptune has his throne,
And Triton moves the waters with his conch's resounding tone.

But when the sun had crossed the line which parteth East from West,
Far off we saw a little isle upon the ocean's breast;
There peacefully, a beauteous thing, the little isle did rest.

And as our shallop, drifting slowly, opened out the land,
Thick-wooded hills, with vales between, uprose on every hand,
While on the beach, invitingly, there lay the milk-white sand.

A surf which lulled the senses with its long, continuous beat,
Fell on the shore and shot its foam, save where a stream did meet
The ocean with its waters, and there the twain like friends did greet.

'Twas here we let the vessel's keel rest on the yielding shore,
We leaped upon the strand, which Ocean's gentle tribute bore,
And it, perchance, had ne'er been pressed by human foot before.

We wandered down a pleasant vale, and felt the languid calm
That filled the place ; the trees diffused a rich, odorous balm ;
Strange birds, with blithe and novel tunes, the mellow air did charm.

We saw not how she came, nor whence, but to our sight appeared
A gracious nymph, whose mien was that of one who in the weird
And mystic palaces of Oceanus had been reared.

Her eyes were like the light of morn, her shape was grace revealed,
Her sheeny hair, in lustrous waves, fell down, and half concealed
A vesture whose resplendent hues no mortal loom could yield.

" Come, rest ye here a little while," the radiant goddess said,
" This is the isle of blessedness—betwixt the quick and dead,
And peacefulness with calm delight is here for ever wed."

The nymph's harmonious voice caressed our tingling ears, and made
The heart's awakened fancies paint our cheeks a warmer shade.
Then, as the goddess came, she went, and from our sight did fade.

THE ISLAND IN THE SEA

Long time we lingered on that isle, and roamed its valleys green ;
We watched the cascade leaping down, we saw its light between
The ancient trees that clothed the hills and broke the cataract's sheen

We heard the rolling of the drums, the drums of human life ;
We heard the eager battle cries, the cries of human strife ;
But they were far-off, ghostly sounds—dim echoes without life.

Our pensive souls responded not to these low murmurings,
The golden-visaged hours flew by, on soft and lulling wings,
And Fancy wove an endless skein of bright imaginings.

One evening, as the sun sank down upon his saffron bed,
And o'er the island and the sea a waning light was shed,
While Night began its mantle dark across the sky to spread,

We launched our little bark again ; the planets gleamed on high ;
The billows shone with glittering sparks, the foam went flashing by,
As we sailed back unto the shore we left so merrily.

Far off we saw the warning beam—the beacon's splendid
ray,
And then appeared the many lights that twinkled round
the bay,
The dark hulls of the ships that rode where we had sailed
away.

The anchor dropped, the sail was furled; the town
was on our lee;
Once more we breathed the busy air that breathes
humanity;
But always will our hearts desire the island in the sea.

THE ENCHANTED LAND

A LAND like ours, yet not the same,
A land where rapture holds its reign,
And lighted by a novel flame.

The hues that from the heart are born,
The rosy tints of Love's bright morn,
By this enchanted land are worn.

The grass, the flowers, the leafy trees,
Are cherished by a finer breeze,
And greener meadows seek to please.

More brightly gleams the sparkling brook,
The bird, by ardent passion shook,
More gaily sings within its nook.

The joyous hours flow swiftly by,
Scarce doth the soul perceive them fly,
Thrilled with a blissful melody.

More musical the voice doth ring,
And lightsome thoughts incessant spring
From out the heart's low murmuring.

And fairy dreams and fancies rise,
Sweet visions float before the eyes,
Bright views of endless Paradise.

All angry passions lulled to rest,
Life courses on with fuller zest,
And blithe emotions fill the breast.

But, not vouchsafed to every eye,
The vision of this land doth fly
From many a one unceasingly.

A gift to those whose inward sight
Is quickened by Love's sweet delight
And purest passion burning bright.

And though its charms may pass and wane,
Earth's ashen garb come back again,
Yet still its memory doth remain.

LOVE, THE GARDENER

Love, the gardener, lightly tilling,
  Deft of hand and gay of heart,
Soils from whose impulse and thrilling
  Flowers of glowing colours start,
Gives the dull and hueless sepals
  Tended by his skilful care
Radiant glory, and the petals
  Fragrance and new splendour wear.

Fruitful grow the barren places
  By the delving of his toil,
Blooms appear and many graces
  Deck the erstwhile rugged soil,
Hope, dear bird, her carol sings,
  Flaming with a voice of fire,
Softly move the rustling wings
  And warm breath of sweet desire.

CHANGELESS FOR EVER

Oh would that love's rapture, in bliss overflowing,
Could dwell in its fullness, nor suffer a change,
Each hour in its bosom fresh blooms of love showing,
And time but revealing affection's vast range—
Changeless for ever! changeless for ever!

No measure can fathom the depth of the ocean
Of tempestuous love that envelopes the heart,
When we yield to the grasp of the kindly emotion
From whose fond embrace we would never more part—
Changeless for ever! changeless for ever!

Oh would that the voice on whose accents we linger,
And dream that its tones are a gift from the sky,
Might dwell in our ears until life is no longer,
Nor cease to be heard while the ages roll by—
Changeless for ever! changeless for ever!

Oh would that the moment when Love's rosy dawning
Is felt by our hearts to become perfect day
Could remain thus unblemished by trouble or scorning,
Its beauty untarnished by time or decay—
Changeless for ever! changeless for ever!

BY THE RIVER

In the deep afternoon, when a mellow light shone
On the languescent waters, and played
'Mid the leaves of the trees, and the flowers' glowing bloom,
While the cattle lay still in the shade,

By the river we sat, and we dreamed our sweet dreams,
Beneath an old monarch's great boughs,
And sometimes we whispered a few words of love,
Repeated our oft-spoken vows.

The manna we tasted that, falling from Heaven,
Is perceived by the bright eye of love,
The food of the gods thrills the blood with delight,
And softest emotions doth move.

Our thoughts were as one, and in unison beating,
Our hearts felt the ring of a passionate chime;
The river flowed softly, and bore on its bosom
The moments we rescued from swift-passing Time.

Like flowers in the springtide, the sweet moments burgeoned
Into blooms that were lavish and free,
Our senses dissolved in their perfume and splendour,
While the river rolled down to the sea.

DREAMS

Oh would I were resting beneath the dark lee
Of some giant mountain o'erlooking the sea,
Upon the grey sands where peace and rest be,

To list to the resonant cadence that rolls
From the ocean outspreading between the far poles,
Like anthems uprising from myriad souls;

To rest and to rest, as the hours droning by
Half waken the thoughts that slumbering lie
In the secret recesses of memory;

To sail on soft wings from the fever-racked Earth
To realms where the visions of fancy have birth,
And fashion a picture of wonderful worth;

To dream of a region where love is not sold,
And men are not weighed in the balance with gold,
And hearts remain young, though bodies grow old;

To dream of delights, without shadow or spot,
The cup of pure pleasure, with ecstasy shot,
The nectar the gods love, whom care troubles not;

To let idle fancy climb up to the skies
And kindle her flambeau at Jove's burning eyes,
Then scatter the sparks to the world's glad surprise;

DREAMS

To dream of fair islands, the brides of the sun,
Begirdled with beauty, not loth to be won,
Their splendid green garments by elfin hands spun,

Where Nature is gracious, with bountiful smiles,
And the sweet, fragrant air to languor beguiles,
While the spirit of beauty walks free through the isles ;

To dream of weird forests, in lands far away,
The home of the Dryad, the home of the Fay,
Where the day is as night and the night is as day,

Where gnarled, knotted trees make a dim twilight shade
And moss clothes the ground of the fern-bedecked glade,
And birds lightly flit 'midst green leaves that ne'er fade ;

To dream of the days when the Muses were young,
And from their full breasts the rich melodies sprung
That touched with quick fire the poet's glad tongue—

But now with the burden of ages oppressed
They fitfully slumber on Parnassus' crest,
Nor heed the deep longings that trouble man's breast.

O dreams that are born of the measureless sea
Of things that are living, of things that may be,
Oh let thy strange wonders appear unto me !

A LAMENT

THERE is a land across the sea
Far, far from me ; far, far from me,
My heart turns to it tenderly
Though far from me,
For there in childhood's days I sung
When all the world and I were young,
And pleasure lightly danced and flung
The flowers that from her fancy sprung
About the hallowed places dear
Now far from me.

In that bright clime my loved ones dwell
Far, far from me,
They think of me, I know full well,
Though far from me.
Sometimes I hear their voices dim
Like echoes of a distant hymn
Sung faintly on Earth's utmost rim,
Far, far from me ;
Perchance they come like spirits blessed,
And stir a tumult in my breast
Though far from me.

Often they sit about my chair,
I seek to touch them unaware,
But, lo ! they vanish like thin air
Far, far from me.

A LAMENT

The sun shines here, but not the same,
It welters with a paler flame
Than in the land from whence I came,
Now far from me.
The moon shoots forth a milder beam,
The stars with fainter lustre gleam
Than in the land of which I dream,
Now far from me.

Oh happy day when I shall see
Once more the land across the sea
Now far from me!
Then shall the sundered hearts be knit
And memories of the sad years flit
As in our pleasant home we sit,
Now far from me.

THE BLACKBIRD *

ONE morn I heard a blackbird's lay
Sound sweetly at the break of day;
He piped a tender song to move
The thoughts of his dear mate to love;
His little soul, in ecstasy,
Poured forth delightful melody.

The spring was come; the sun had kissed
Away the winter's gloomy mist;
The buds grew thick, and then the trees
Flushed green before the vernal breeze,
While from the earth the glowing flowers
Peeped forth to greet the sunny hours.

With music clear, and many a trill,
The blackbird shook the air so still;
The passion of his strain was strong,
And roused the feathered choir to song;
Each bird sang in its own sweet way
And swelled th' amorous roundelay.

The sun rose up, and his rich hoard
From out his golden casket poured,

* The reader must bear in mind that this poem was written in New Zealand.

THE BLACKBIRD

With pleasant warmth the air was filled
And joyfully the gay birds trilled;
The world a robe of gladness wore
And brighter hues than e'er before.

O blackbird! coming from afar,
From distant lands where dwells the star
Which glitters by the Northern Pole,
And Boreal seas their surges roll;
A stranger to this southern clime,
Thy voice here soundeth like the chime

Of far-off, long-forgotten bells,
Whose music suddenly upwells
From our full hearts when some chance word
Or ancient tune by us is heard;
And from the depths of memory rise
Scenes long since vanished from our eyes.

O chorister! whose dulcet voice
Has made the heart of man rejoice
Through many centuries, and bound
His thoughts in chains of silver sound,
Let thy rich fancy wander free
And fill the air with melody!

THE THRUSH

O THRUSH ! that welcomest the spring
With joyous trills and pleasant eye,
How grateful falls upon the ear
Thy untaught minstrelsy !
Perched on a poplar's lofty bough,
Thou dost with liquid music greet
The green grass rising from the earth,
The primrose and the violet sweet.

Through summer's splendours, autumn's chills,
Resounds thy light and festal song,
Sometimes in little lays, half-born,
Sometimes in glorious fugue, and strong ;
Thy carols wake the morning when
The shrinking stars grow dim and pale,
And all the living things that move
The golden sunbeams hail.

It chances that, some winter day,
The irksome air grows warm and mild,
The sun shines forth, the placid world
Breathes softly like a sleeping child ;
Then issues from the leafless grove
A few notes of a low sweet tune,
Which tell us that thy voice remains
The master of a magic rune.

THE THRUSH

For were the song of bird to cease,
And silence fall on hill and wood;
And feathered creatures noiseless sweep
Athwart the air in pensive mood,
The music that wells from the earth,
Where wondrous melodies lie stored,
Would lose the splendour of its tones,
And shattered be its finest chord.

O bird! whose voice enthralled the ears
Of men in ages long forgot,
Thy song delightful soothes the hearts
Of rich and those of humble lot;
Amid the groves of Paradise
Thy trills at even Adam heard
Ere by a dear companion's smile
The depths of human love were stirred.

When first thou piped'st thy anthem sweet
'Twas early in Creation's day,
Thou drank'st the primal dews that fell
From Heaven that glistened far away;
Thy tongue was touched with music born
In some remote, celestial sphere,
Where care, nor pain, nor toil is felt,
Nor sorrow sheds its bitter tear.

Sing on, O bird! for thy blithe strains
Are Nature's own immortal song,
Thou art a chorister who chants
An anthem in an unknown tongue;

THE THRUSH

With liquid ripplings flowing free
  Thou bringest joy to him who knows
The secret places whose retreat
  Can give the wearied mind repose.

BIRD-SONGS

How sweet the songs by gay birds sung
  In springtide hours when o'er the Earth
The sun his mantle warm has flung
  And flowers from inert seeds have birth!

They chirp and pipe delightful lays
  By love's voluptuous warmth inspired,
And usher in the sunny days
  With warblings by strong passion fired.

They herald with ecstatic strains
  The advent of a season new,
Unfolding as the winter wanes
  Fresh beauties daily to the view.

Their voices fill the pleasant air
  And quicken it with life and joy,
The tremors of a music rare,
  A chaste delight, without alloy.

Ye silver-throated creatures gay,
  Rejoicing in the summer sun,
Whence go ye when your merry day
  And little mundane tasks are done?

A DREAM

THE night was in its prime ; the ebon sky
Was gemmed and fretted with unnumbered stars
That shone like living eyes ; the Milky Way
Displayed its lustrous and majestic train
Upon the floor of Heaven ; while silence wrapped
The world in soft embrace and stillness rare.
'Tis in such hours the mind casts off the gyves
That bind it oft, and we can roam in thought
Beyond the narrow confines of our lot
And walk the Universe. A vision rose
Slow born and wonderful, and cast a spell
Upon my troubled brain, that vainly sought
To break th' enchantment, for the vision seemed
A dream within a dream. A summer sun
Bathed the enamoured Earth with glowing light ;
The fields were green ; the leaves that clothed the trees
Danced to the music of the jocund air ;
The birds carolled delightful utterings ;
The cattle browsed upon the prosperous lea
Or chewed the cud with gratified content ;
All Nature was alert and rich with life,
Except that man, the end and crown of things,
No longer dwelt upon the terrene globe
Enjoying there a little span of years,
For war's dire slaughter, and the deadly darts
Of pestilence on pestilence had racked

A DREAM

All lands through many centuries, till none
Were left to breathe the breath of human life
Or procreate their kind. Great cities stood
Untenanted; their palaces and marts,
Where once ambition and the greed of gain
Made many hearts beat fiercely—where gaiety,
And grief, and love, and all the varied moods
That render man the plaything of desire,
Stirred with full force an animated throng—
Were mute and desolate; proud fleets decayed
Beside the rotting wharves; the thick red rust
Fed on the dreadnought, and its mighty guns
Lay by their mountings; nor did a single wreath
Of smoke curl upward from the silent farms
Or wheel of mill obey the rushing stream:
Man's work was done; but still the globe rolled on
And sought in space a new and fresh career.

THE SONG OF SOLITUDE

A BIRD was warbling in a sombre wood,
Piping his song hard by to where I stood,
The wood resounded with his cheerful note
As music rippled from his gifted throat,
But he sang all alone.

No mate had he, with sympathising ear,
And love-lit eye reposing on her dear,
To pay a welcome tribute to his power
And share the rapture of his heavenly dower,
But he sang all alone.

Adown the ancient wood's umbrageous aisles,
Athwart its copses where the warm sun smiles,
Rang sweet and clear the bird's archaic chime,
A tune first carolled in a far-off time,
But he sang all alone.

A waste it seemed, this noble monody,
A useless flood of glorious melody,
That from the bird's enchanted bosom poured,
Where every strain of harmony lay stored,
For he sang all alone.

THE SONG OF SOLITUDE

So doth the sea, in some lone tropic bay,
Where luscious day succeeds to luscious day,
Chant the grand chant that issues from its surge
When it falls proudly on the coral verge,
But chants it all alone.

For beauty shines where oft it is not viewed,
The aloe blooms in desert solitude,
And music ripples where it is not heard;
Sometimes the soul of man, sometimes of bird,
Sings its sweet song alone.

The spirit of the Universe that breathes
The foam of life and ardent love that seethes
Throughout the world, from its glad bounty breaks
Into spontaneous melody, and makes
A music of its own.

There needs no listener for th' enraptured soul,
From its own sources of delight there roll
And bubble up, like an exuberant spring,
The waters that their joyous spoutings fling
In music of their own.

And yet, perchance, some loiterer in the shade,
Supinely wandering down life's rocky glade,
May feel the pulses of his heart beat strong
Responding to the strains of the strange song
That is sung all alone.

O mother Nature! who with jealous eyes
Thy secrets guard'st from those who sympathise

THE SONG OF SOLITUDE

Not with thy beauty, nor the glowing flame,
The tide of passion that flows through thy frame,
Nor with thy song,

Reveal thyself to my perfected sight
And let me see thee in thy own pure light,
Give me the power to know thee as thou art,
And hear the beatings of thy wondrous heart,
Also thy song.

NATURE

THERE are a voice and silence that oppress
The mind with awe, and make it dimly feel
How little 'tis removed from nothingness,
A spark that flies from Nature's whirring wheel—
The voice is of the Sea, whose godlike song
Has pealed unceasing since Creation's dawn;
It floats amid the air that wafts along,
And on the typhoon's thund'rous wings is borne;
From Ocean's vast unfathomed depths arise
The chords of strange, impassioned harmonies.

The silence is the Night's: the wind is still,
And countless stars begem the night's black crest,
Soft slumber spreads its veil o'er plain and hill,
All things seem wrapped in an eternal rest;
Then thought on thought ascend, and seek an air
Beyond the confines of Earth's narrow bounds,
Freely they roam, and mount to regions where
The shuttle of life's varied loom resounds.
Clay-clad, brute-made, man grovels in the sty,
Yet his proud wit can pierce infinity.

There is a solitude that soothes the mind,
And yet gives birth to fears; it dwells within
The forest old and dim; where creepers wind
Around the gnarled tree-trunks their tendrils thin;

The hoary moss grows thick, and naught is heard
  But some weird sound of falling bough or tree,
Or little twitter of an unseen bird,
  Or creeping thing that moveth warily.
Amidst this pensive solitude awhile
We from the world our senses may beguile.

The voice, the solitude, and silence are
  But shades and breathings of immortal things;
Each coming from a glorious realm afar,
  Some balm of consolation brings.
The noises of the world grow faint, and fade
  Before the presence of infinity,
And Nature's mighty form looms through the shade,
  Majestic in its calm serenity.
Changeless is Nature, yet most mutable,
Its wonders manifold, ineffable.

THE CASTAWAY

A LONELY rock in a lonely sea,
  Scattered with splashes of foam,
Churned in the depths where the sea-sprites dwell
  And the Nereids have their home ;
Shot with light from the utmost dark
  Where creatures ungainly be,
About it the unkempt breezes chant
  Wild anthems unceasingly.

Monolith raised by the earthquake's might,
  Torn from a quarry old
When the thunder 'neath the ocean bed
  In dreadful pealings rolled,
The waves boiled up in a turbid flood,
  And the sky was dimmed with smoke
That came from the secret places whence
  The fiery tempest broke.

A lonely man on this lonely rock
  A desolate watch doth keep,
For his comrades all have left their lives
  In the grasp of the ethal deep,
The ship sleeps sound on the ocean bed
  And its memory, day by day,
Grows dim, till none doth name its name,
  Save the sad-faced castaway.

The sea-birds squat on their couches rude,
Nor heed that his step draws nigh—
Companions they, and he seeks from them
A measure of sympathy;
For the throes that shake the soul of man
Are felt by the seabird too,
The chords that are struck for humankind
Ring all creation through.

The brown seal mews on its rocky ledge,
And the kelp swings to and fro,
Its broad fronds showing their shiny beads
As the surges come and go.
The blazing sun with its torch becomes
The scourge of the listless day,
Till the evening spreads its welcome cloak
O'er the sad-faced castaway.

Solitude born of the sombre night
When hushed is the seafowl's cry,
And the moon suspends its silver lamp
From the star-bespangled sky;
Solitude bred from the weary waste
That welters low in the sun,
And seems the same when the day begins
As it does when the day is done.

The voice whose strong crying is heard in
Nature's recesses alone
Gives a rapture to those who can hear its
Varied and glorious tune;

But the heart seeks a living devotion,
The beat of another heart nigh,
When gladness responds unto gladness,
And sigh responds unto sigh.

FROM ROCKY LEDGE

From rocky ledge, nigh unto Heaven's own gateway,
Rejoicing leaps the flashing waterfall;
The mists ascend; above the sunlit spray
The rainbow hangs its tinted arch o'er all.

The living creatures whose perpetual presence
Brings gladness to the land, and air, and sea,
Bear each within its breast life's unknown essence,
Creation's most recondite mystery.

But we have lost the sense of things immortal,
Pacing upon a dull, mechanic plane,
Nor heed the whispers that from wisdom's portal
Exhort us to pursue the higher gain.

The thunder rolls, but it awakes no echo
Beyond the sullen roar that fills the ear;
The lightning flames, but its bright dazzlings show
No depths save those which to the eye appear.

Throughout the night the starry clusters gleam
And countless suns that burn so far away
That their immeasurable torches seem
But golden points that in fixed places stay.

We watch their times and motions, and perceive
  Between them and this globe analogies,
A common force between them all doth weave
  A twisted strand of many coloured plies.

Our minds grow dull; the joy of youth no longer
  Bounds gaily through the warm, impassioned veins,
The dance is slow, and fashion's chains are stronger
  Than Nature's crude and inartistic skeins.

We count the hours; the minutes sadly linger,
  The wine of life is drunk unto the lees;
How shall the cup be filled, and who the bringer?
  When shall again sweet music court the breeze?

The fire that floods the Universe with splendour
  Burns as of old; untarnished are its rays,
But sullen mists from out the marshes render
  Its flames an idle phantom in the haze.

Oh that some spirit, from the realms untravelled
  Beyond the utmost ken of human thought
Would breathe a breath drawn from the winds Elysian
  With life of gods and perfect vigour fraught!

The world is ours; its lights and shadows blending,
  About its hill-tops oft the lightnings gleam,
Strange visions rise, from untold depths ascending,
  Sometimes it seems a dream within a dream.

THE VOICES OF THE EARTH

The voices of the Earth are manifold,
They pause not day or night, and all express
The endless strivings of its restlessness,
The searchings of its soul profound and old,
Nor shall they cease until the sun grows cold.
Soft sigh the summer breezes as they pass
Across the meadows verdant with lush grass,
Or rustle through the cornfields' ripening gold.
About the brook the busy insects hum,
The birds make gay the air with countless notes,
Brave songs proceeding from their joyous throats
The grasshopper beats on his merry drum;
The cascade leaps adown the rocky glade,
A choral temple by its music made.

Dread is the lion's roar when heard by night,
The jungle shakes when many a savage beast
Cries fearfully, pursuing his dire feast,
The wolf-pack howls when comes the prey in sight,
And, lo! the globe itself, bestirred by might,
Gives forth its utterances strange and wild,
The mutterings of Dame Nature's wondrous child,
From Chaos fashioned by the quickening light.

THE VOICES OF THE EARTH

The storm-winds shriek across the foam-clad sea,
  Echoes the thunder 'mongst the rugged hills,
  And subterranean sound with terror fills
All animated things when horrently
  The earthquake creeps and rumbles in his lair,
  And cries of frighted men pervade the air.

THE INVITATION

I HEARD a strange voice calling, loudly calling unto me,
" Why linger in the city where the truth is bought and sold,
Where the brain is always seething and the heart is never free
From the fever and the canker of the fierce pursuit of gold ?

" See'st thou not the many marvels of this wondrous earthly ball
Clad with soft and fleecy garments of the ever-changing cloud,
Sometimes with silvern draperies that in thick masses fall,
Or barred with gold and crimson when the glowing sunbeams crowd ?

" Lo ! it throbs with animation, seas, and turquoise-tinted lakes,
Plains, and mountains hoary, meadows basking in the sun,
Every moment some new creature to an earthly being wakes
From the silence of old chaos to a realm of gladness won.

"Though of gold your purse be empty, yet of land and sky and sea
The glories are your kingdom, where you may roam at will,
Watch the azure of the mountain, and the greenness of the lea,
Listen to the soft winds sighing, and the murmur of the rill.

"When Love, on merry pinions, scatters roses here and there,
Seldom he on wealthy mansion doth his choicest gifts bestow;
Where the simple heart is waiting in a trance of fancy, there
He the best of all his guerdons with a bounteous hand doth throw.

"And the pulses that through Nature stir the varied forms of life,
From the dull and creeping insect to the dwellers in the sun,
Never make their palpitation felt amid the stress and strife
Of the battle of keen spirits where much gold is lost and won."

Then the voice grew faint and fainter till its tones were heard no more,
And they passed and were forgotten like a pleasant summer's dream,
But they touched a finer fancy than had been my lot before,
And the world put on new beauty in the splendour of its gleam.

LO, WE HAVE GROWN MORE WISE

Lo, we have grown more wise than men of old
  Who saw a deity in every star,
  And when the thunder, pealing from afar,
Athwart the sky in dreadful tremors rolled
They deemed that thus did Jove his wrath unfold,
  While o'er the creatures that in ocean play
  Poseidon ruled, with sole despotic sway—
Majestic was his form, of might untold;
And priests, by forest altars rude, intoned
  Brave hymns unto the nymphs divine who reigned
  O'er wood and grove, nor was their love disdained
By gods, who in the lofty skies enthroned
  Came down to Earth and brought the fire of love,
  First kindled in the glorious realms above.

But now we hear unmoved the thunder peal
  And deem it but the crash of forces blind,
  Whose clangour is as mindless as the wind
That roves around the world with aimless zeal;
And when the moonbeams o'er the ocean steal
  Flushing the sullen waves with silver light
  We do not dream, though ravished by the sight,
That Cynthia thus his glory doth reveal.

LO, WE HAVE GROWN MORE WISE

The forest hears no voice of faun or fay,
No dryad sports within its bosky glades,
A soulless life dwells in its green arcades,
A life that stirs the sap in some mechanic way;
'Natheless I ween we have not fathomed all
The powers and lives that haunt this mundane ball.

FANCY

Fancy sweet, from slumber waking,
  Ope thy palace gates to me,
Let my soul's enraptured vision
  All its many marvels see.

Chambers golden, fretted, glorious,
  Full of pleasant mystery,
Where elate we wander gaily
  From oppressive cares set free.

There the dreams of all the ages,
  Dreams of gnome, and dreams of fay,
Myths and wondrous tales of India,
  Legends strange of old Cathay,

Dwell unchanged for aye and ever,
  Living like corporeal things,
Not the misty shapes begotten
  Of our own imaginings.

Legends of enchanted maidens
  Turned by wicked arts to stone,
Legends of heroic princes
  In whose eyes all goodness shone,

FANCY

Legends of the ocean cities
  Where Poseidon is the lord,
And the treasures of his kingdom
  In the sea's strange caves are stored.

All take seeming life and motion
  As if time had backward sprung,
Leaping into long-past ages
  When the world was fresh and young.

And perchance a mellow glory
  Streaming through the crystal panes
Fills some chamber with bright visions
  Of the future and its gains,

Vague as hopes that oft beguile us
  In the buoyant days of youth,
Yet the glamour of their frenzy
  Guiding us unto the truth.

Fancy, queen of wondrous kingdoms,
  Realms where idle musings play,
But the charm of their begetting
  Shall not fade, nor pass away.

MEDITATIONS

The deep sea pants with heavy suspirations,
The world is clad with beauty as of yore,
The sun sends forth its glowing undulations,
And night reclines upon a starry shore.

The ancient forests with their trees and mosses,
And blithe birds fluttering in the green arcades,
The gnarled trunks rugged with time-battered bosses,
Still hide a mystery in their hallowed shades.

The seasons come and go, in fixed mutation,
Just as they did in centuries gone by,
Each keeps its course, at its appointed station,
Unchangeable as changeless destiny.

And yet the sight is dim to our discerning,
Our pulses quicken not when we behold
The flame of nature with its ruddy burning,
Our hearts remain like sullen clay and cold.

The morning crowns the mountain tops with glory,
The snow spreads o'er their sides its mantle cold,
Down the ravines the glaciers old and hoary
Reluctant creep, with many an icy fold.

The blossom from the plaited bud emerges,
  Its petals growing large from hour to hour,
Until its beauty to the sunlight surges
  In all the splendour of the perfect flower.

Life palpitates in many forms and phases,
  No part of Earth where man has ever trod
But is the home of animated races,
  Some walk or fly, some crawl beneath the sod.

They live their lives, then drift into the gloaming
  From whose dark shades none ever can return;
Their lot fulfilled, they cease their busy roaming,
  And Fate shakes further lives from its eternal urn.

GLIMPSES

A SERAPH voice spoke in the night
In language of a distant clime:
"Come forth, and bask amid the light
That waits for thee!
Let now thy thoughts on pinions strong
Ascend from out this earthly slime
And by swift rapture borne along
Rise blissfully!

"Then shalt thou see before thee spread
The noble presence of the real,
Not world-wrought shadows that are wed
To minds perplexed,
Whose mazy forms and images
From inward sight the truth conceal,
With their delusive mirages
Man is but vexed.

"And thou shalt list the notes that fell
On Adam's ear in happy days,
That from the founts of Heaven did well
When Earth was glad,
Ere sin had touched a harsher string
That gave forth rude, discordant lays,
Then joy from Eden's groves took wing
And Earth grew sad."

GLIMPSES

I heard and struggled to obey,
  But slender meshes held me fast;
My thoughts were hampered, nor could they
    Break into flight,
And yet my quickened senses caught
  The scattered splendours that were cast
From urns by noble seraphs brought
    From realms of light.

FAIRY LAND

O HAPPY land! where once Titania reigned
O'er fairy peoples from a floral throne,
There sounded oft the horns of rippling tone,
The elfin horns that gentle music rained;
Gone Oberon and his gay court that gained
Light-footed pleasures 'mongst the trees and flowers,
Who revelled in the sunbeams, while the hours
Flowed by as each some novel bliss attained.
Yet lest too much of happiness should cloy
A band of sprites on mischief oft were bent,
Puck was their ruler, and in him were blent
Malice and wisdom in complex alloy.
Strange was the sun which they beheld at noon,
The night revealed a full, romantic moon.

Yet oft I wis that fays and elves live still,
Though our dim eyes may not their forms discern,
For much have we of Nature's lore to learn,
The varied workings of her wondrous will,
And many phases that by turns fulfil
And make the fashion of her orb complete;
While multitudinous pulses beat
And through the Universe stirs Life's strong thrill.

Dark is the ignorance of these new days,
We are replete with knowledge of a kind
That clouds the vision of the sated mind;
Confused we wander in a tangled maze,
Nor dream there are of souls a finer brood
Than those invested with coarse flesh and blood.

Perchance shall come a time when men, o'erfed
With wealth immense and lavish luxury,
And ceaseless round of idle revelry,
Where vacuous minds a weary circuit tread,
May, for relief, to simpler ways be led.
When man to Nature makes himself ally,
And soaring upward to the higher sky,
The soul unto a finer sense is bred;
The noble beings that frequent the Earth
In viewless legions make their presence known
As we, by rapture led, enter the zone
Where dwell the creatures not of mortal birth;
Thus shall we hear amid the forest lorn
The rippling music of the elfin horn.

THE ÆOLIAN HARP

O HARP Æolian, wedded to the wind,
Whose gentle fingers from thy magic strings
Coax forth rare harmonies,
Not music such as from man's fancy springs
When he, aspiring to delightful things,
Beats out a pleasant lay,
Framed on an idle day
With art from instruments that his deft hands have made,
But subtler, finer tones,
The fragrance of sweet sounds
That scarcely seek the listening ear to please
As if they were
Soft confidences 'twixt them and the amorous breeze.

Thou lov'st thy bridegroom's light caress;
When o'er the flower-clad fields he leaps
Laden with dreams of happiness,
And into thy own bower he peeps,
Your voices twain together blend
Into a single, rippling strain,
Like brooks that meet and thenceforth wend
A murmuring stream across the plain.

THE ÆOLIAN HARP

The wind can live without thee
But thou hast neither voice nor being till his touch
Inspires thy chords with life and melody,
Then from them sounds seraphic float and rise
And fall, and rise again in strains
Unmatched in their melodious harmonies.

Thou answerest not unto the angry wind,
Thy timid soul creeps to its secret cell,
And there awaits the passing of his wrath,
Until again his tenderness shall well.

O harp Æolian, silent art thou and lorn
Save when the jocund and caressing air
Bids thee give forth the music in thy heart,
Then dost thou yield rich strains and fancies fair.

THE MAGIC TUNE

Oh sing to me some magic tune
  Which mortal ear has never heard,
A tune which gushes from the heart
  Like carols from a joyous bird.

A tune full fed from those rich streams
  Of music that well gloriously
From Nature's founts, and fill the world
  With rippling waves of melody.

When, rising in the eastern sky,
  The morning blushes, rosy red,
The silver trumpets of the dawn
  Blithe harmonies around them spread.

An anthem rich, of many tones,
  Enchants the air of summer noon,
And with the wings of fancy lulls
  The senses to a lang'rous swoon.

Sweet snatches of half-finished lays
  The fading light of evening brings;
The cattle low, and by the brook
  The insect in its fashion sings.

THE MAGIC TUNE

The streamlet, purling o'er the stones,
  Chants hour by hour a soothing strain;
The river hymns a grander note
  While moving proudly to the main.

The forest has its choir unseen
  Whose music charms the ancient trees,
And down its leafy alleys float
  Half-born and mystic harmonies.

O subtle power that bathes the earth
  In symphonies that come from far,
From regions that do lie beyond
  The limits of the utmost star,

The surfs of thy enchanted sea
  Upon the shores melodious roll
Of that mysterious land where dwell
  The twilight fancies of the soul!

In chains of metre thou art bound
  To meet the wants of human ears,
But thy rich chords reverberate
  Untrammelled through the starry spheres.

THE CHURCH BELLS

PEAL on, O mellow-throated bells, with your sweet chiming,
And let your voices mingle with the breeze,
With silver tongues from slumber deep beguiling
The Past and its rich throng of memories.
Through childhood's sunny hours your music stealing
Weaves many a gay and pleasant fantasy;
It wanders o'er the chords of youthful feeling
And wakens hopes of glories that shall be.
Peal on, O bells, peal on, with fuller strain,
And summon back again
The days of old, when men indeed were young,
And through their hearts the voice of Honour rung,
To deeds of high emprise
And proud achievement loudly calling.
And oft with merry din
The bells aroused the tower of minster grey,
When some great Paladin,
The sunlight on his crested helmet falling,
A martial train their gallant chief escorting,
Left on his pious quest,
His valiant soul oppressed
For that the infidel, with evil pride,
Possessed the spot where Christ Himself had died
And all the land which thus was sanctified.
Deep in his ardent soul
Sank the bells' tumultuous roll,

THE CHURCH BELLS

Throbbing, throbbing, throbbing, throbbing for the strife.
In the passing of the years,
Flushed with human hopes and fears,
Lo ! the music of the bells enthrals man's life,
Till around his heart is thrown
All the glamour of their tone.
In the day when to his side
The young lover takes his bride,
And to each a world new-born
Opens through the golden morn ;
In the day of jubilee,
When in rapturous ecstasy,
All the nation surges free,
From the belfry streams melodious symphony ;
While on Sabbath morn and eve
Floating from each Christian fane
Comes the deep sonorous breve
Calling men to prayer again.
But, O impassioned bells, how gloriously your pealing
Falls on the patriot's ear and inmost feeling,
When from deep gloom and days of weary waiting
Your joyous clangour o'er the city reeling
Proclaims the foemen flying in full rout,
The day of victory !
Chime on, chime on, O bells, in future years,
And echo still the nation's hopes and fears,
And raise our thoughts unto the starry spheres !

A GUITAR SONG

In days of love and gladness,
Ere thought was tinged with sadness
We sang, in youthful madness,
Singing to the sweet guitar.

Our veins with vigour flushing,
Life's sparkling fount uprushing,
We sang with spirits gushing,
Singing to the sweet guitar.

Our mirthful voices blending,
To music's realms ascending,
We sang gay songs unending,
Singing to the sweet guitar.

And, moved by passion stealing
Through every inward feeling,
We danced, in mazes wheeling,
Dancing to the sweet guitar.

Like sunbeams shifting lightly,
Our feet, through measures sprightly,
Flitted here and there so brightly,
Dancing to the sweet guitar.

A GUITAR SONG

Lightly tripping in and out,
Circling round and round about,
Gaily in a rhythmic rout,
Dancing to the sweet guitar.

Bright threads of fancy weaving,
Dear glances often gleaming,
Half wakened and half dreaming,
Dancing to the sweet guitar.

Time lay him down and slumbered,
While we, through hours unnumbered,
From all the world was sundered,
Dancing to the sweet guitar.

THE TREE

WHAT rises here from out the ground
Where dark it lay ?
A leaflet struggling without sound
Unto the day,
Unto the sun's creative heat,
Life-giving glow,
That makes the seed's cold pulses beat,
Its sap to flow.

The leaflet hides within its blade
A mystery ;
What woke the seed in torpor laid,
What Life may be,
If but the leaflet could reveal
In language plain
Glorious the knowledge that would peal
Throughout man's brain.

Fed by the ever-teeming earth,
Warmed by the sun,
The plant becomes a thing of worth
From darkness won ;
Upward aspires towards the sky
Its leading shoot,
The soil is probed most searchingly
By its slim root ;

THE TREE

The great boughs spread afar and make
A blest retreat
When through the air the fierce rays break
With scorching heat,
The rustling of the leaves is heard
As by the breeze
The verdant foliage is stirred
Like summer seas.

It stands at length, in pride supreme,
A noble tree,
The gay birds lighten with their gleam
Its canopy,
Their carols ring when from his bed
The sun doth rise;
Thus birds carolled when Adam wed
In Paradise.

All through the summer still it grows
Year after year,
Its ardent life knows not repose,
A rolling sphere;
But when the autumn, with bare head,
And winter meet
The mantle of its leaves is spread
Across its feet.

The tree is linked with men and breathes
The selfsame air
That the revolving globe unwreathes
Like gossamer;

THE TREE

The days and nights, the rain and dry,
The seasons' round,
The tree endures in peace, and by
Its zone is bound.

A million insects idly haunt
Its crannies small,
About its rugged trunk and gaunt
They creep and crawl ;
The tree's rich blood they suck with greed,
Its life inhale,
In mazy multitudes they breed
Countless as hail.

Close to the whirling globe it clings
As through vast space
The terrene like a seraph wings
An endless race ;
The murmurings of the souls that dwell
In regions rare
About the tree's dark bosses swell
When night lies bare.

The centuries pass, but proud and strong
The monarch reigns,
His presence clothed with ages long
In grandeur gains ;
He looks upon the sons of men,
Mortals of clay,
Whose years are few and fleeting—soon
They glide away.

THE COPPER BEECH

In an old-fashioned garden a copper beech stood,
A tree so majestic ne'er grew in a wood,
Its boughs with their foliage spread proudly around,
Diffusing cool shadows o'er meadows of ground.
Many birds built their nests in the safest of nooks
Which they found, here and there, in its manifold crooks;
The zephyrs disporting made the leaves of the tree
Flit hither and thither, and dance merrily;
But when fiercely grasped by the hand of the storm
It shook, but resisted, throughout its grand form.

Round the life of the tree many memories twined
And linked its own life with the life of mankind;
Each year with its seasons knitted closer the wreath,
And the sap of the tree flowed more richly beneath.
The spring gave it vigour, and the winter made strong
The heart of the beech to bear every wrong.

In days of hot summers, 'midst the cool of its shade,
Young children, and old, through the mellow hours played.
It watched their gay frolics, often melting in tears,
Their joys and their passions, and their quick-rising fears.

Its leaves' pleasant rustling gave a charm to their play,
And the unheeded moments flowed swiftly away.

O days that are golden! when our youth wears its bloom,
And the child's callow fancies ripe beauty assume,
As the buds on the trees their green leaflets unfold,
When the spring is at hand, and its flag is unrolled.
O days evanescent! yet the pleasures ye bring
Down the subsequent years in sweet echoings ring.

Queer letters and carvings made the trunk of the beech
A book with a story for those it could teach,
Strong youths and fair maidens their light fancies expressed
In letters and emblems on the tree's rugged breast;
And the birds overhead, in their wonderful way,
Chirruped, twittered, and warbled each with its own lay.

But the tree oft looked down on the low rustic seat
That was restfully placed by its knotty, strong feet,
Perceived the staid matron, who had turned life's mid page,
In the ponderings of calm meditation engage.
When the summer's profusions grew scanty and sere,
And the rich hues of autumn began to appear,
Her fingers slow plying some delicate toil,
She mused on past pleasures, redeeming life's moil.
And the pharos of hope, with enlivening beam
Made the future with flashes of happiness gleam.

THE COPPER BEECH

As the months and the seasons rolled by in long train,
There grew in this garden again and again
Verdant shrubs and gay flowers that bloomed each for its day
Then gave up its life to the doom of decay.
But the copper beech stood, with its proud, shaggy head,
The joy of the living, the shrine of the dead.

THE GARDEN

O GARDEN mine! thy trees and flowers,
  Thy turfs and shady nooks of rest,
Are pledges of delightful hours,
  The solace of a wearied breast;
Thy charms are ever changing, and
  They mirror in a fashion clear
The day and night's mutations, with
  The passing seasons of the year.

Each flower is but a tender thought
  Of plant or shrub on which it grows,
The buds, with secret beauty fraught,
  By slow degrees, their charms disclose;
The bee makes search for honied store
  Wherewith to fill its golden comb,
And many an insect roams the floor
  Of a resplendent, perfumed home.

Rich are thy shadows, garden mine!
  Rich are the lights that move and play
When sailing through the full sunshine
  The cloudlets dim the face of day;

Thy moods are many, like the mind
Of man that mirrors outward things,
While he his devious course doth wind
Through life and its imaginings.

Sweet are the waking dreams we dream
When wandering in the pale moonlight,
Thy walks unto the vision seem
Strange vistas clothed in wan samite;
Kind thoughts of all whom we have known
Bid discord and disturbance cease,
And o'er the stormy world is thrown
The mantle of a generous peace.

Thy memories mingle, day by day,
The lives of many with thy own,
Like realm of fancy and of fay
Thy charms are quickened by a tone
Superior to our common needs,
Yet not entirely from them riven,
A spirit moving through the reeds,
Half-born on Earth, half-born in Heaven.

O garden mine! when, 'neath the snows
Of winter lie thy treasures stored,
Unruffled is thy deep repose,
Whilst thou fresh-gathered strength doth hoard
Until the brook's full murmuring,
The blackbird's love-song in the morn,
Proclaim the advent of the Spring,
The coming of the summer's corn.

O garden mine! link thou thy chains
  In pleasant wreaths about my heart,
Let their mild bondage soothe the pains
  And ease awhile the bitter smart
Attendant on the rack and strife,
  The struggle and the weary war,
That make the endless toil of life
  And on our finer fancies jar.

THE ORCHARD

THE orchard hears the whispers of the Spring,
And by the warm caresses of the sun
Its sluggish soul to sudden ardour won
Quickens the trees to glorious burgeoning;
Then little leaves unto the branches cling,
Till soon a silver mantle drapes the pear,
The apple blooms perfume the gracious air,
And birds unto their loves gay carols sing
Whose sweetest notes acclaim the early morn;
Sometimes the breezes rustle through the boughs,
Snatching off blossoms in jocund carouse,
Or scatter sleet from winter's caverns borne;
The humid ground with fervid life is filled,
By worm and ant the orchard's soil is tilled.

Deep throbs the heart of summer as the fruit
Grows fuller day by day, and the plump peach
Mantles with blushes at the sun's hot speech,
While flames the plum clad in its purple suit,
And in the grove is heard the owl's weird hoot
When night's bright lamps hang from a velvet sky,
And sigh the zephyrs most voluptuously;
The glowworm burns beside the mossy root.

THE ORCHARD

Dim unformed shades are seen amidst the trees—
An idle band until the lingering moon
Shall show her peerless head—a splendid boon
Coming from out th' empyreal mysteries.
The breath of Summer fans the slumbering Earth,
Thus fancies sweet and wondrous dreams have birth.

Autumn with stately mien approaches now
And ripens all the golden fruits that lie
Unplucked beneath their leafy canopy,
A glowing treasure, hung from many a bough.
The thick mists of the early morn endow
The orchard with a wealth of starry gems
That every leaf with crystal lustres hems;
The firm, strong day looks on with burning brow,
But oft a shiver thrills the pensive eve,
Disturbed by chills of Winter that again
Is slowly coming o'er the frozen main
To brace the strong and make the feeble grieve.
Soon will the Earth have yielded all her store
And leaves, and flowers, and fruit be seen no more.

THE MEADOW

THE meadow was kissed by the sun and it flamed with delight,
For the heart in its bosom was stirred by emotions untold,
And the life that lay hidden gave forth its wealth to man's sight,
Like a casket that yields up its treasures of gems and of gold.

The blossoms were scattered profusely about the green lea,
Their colours were rich, and the fragrance made heavy the sensuous air
That was filled with the gratified hum of the well-laden bee,
And the butterfly made the bright sunshine a radiance rare.

Thus the meadow in garments of beauty was dressed for a space,
Its sad days forgotten, the winter so mournful and drear,
A smile like joy's self rippled over its glorified face,
A vision had sprung from the dark in the morn of the year.

THE BELLS OF THE PAST

Lo! the bells of the Past in my ears
Sound their beautiful song;
Their chimes ripple sweetly and break
Into harmonies strong;
Their voices are rich with delight,
Commingled with tears;
They ring out the changes that passed
O'er manifold years.

Through the strain of their musical clang
Leap the echoes of Fate,
That fashions the fortunes and lives
Of both lowly and great;
Full oft its unwelcome decree
Shuts the door to Desire,
The dear, cherished hopes of our days
Casts adown in the mire.

Oh! the bells of the Past are replete
With joys that are fled,
With the passion and frenzy that flushed
The youth that is dead;
When the flowers that bathed in the dew
Wore colours more rare,
And a warmer and fuller sunshine
Made mellow the air.

THE BELLS OF THE PAST

Through the caverns of mem'ry their tones
  Wander softly, and wake
From their slumber the idols that reigned—
  The idols we make —
O'er our hearts, where each ruled for a space,
  For a year and a day;
Then our fancy new altars bedecked,
  And the old passed away.

In the hours of our thinking the bells
  Sound their mystical chimes,
From Heaven their message is brought
  In resonant rhymes;
By the soul's loosened pinions upborne
  We struggle to rise;
On the untraversed ether we float
  And clamber the skies.

Oh! the bells of the Past ring a peal,
  A carillon old,
Whose wavelets of music our hearts
  With quiet enfold;
In slumbers Elysian we sink,
  Like the bird to its nest,
When the peace of the evening is laid
  On the earth's weary breast.

SPRING

How oft have we the rustling heard
  That stirs through bush and tree
When Winter, passing to its rest,
  Wails its last monody!
The buds peep from their little cells
  And eke the leaves unclose
Of tree, and shrub, and early bloom
  Of violet and primrose.

The sunbeams fall with riches light,
  And daily warmer grow,
The pulses of the woods beat fast,
  Their veins with ardour glow;
O'er field and hedge, o'er glade and lea,
  The birds gay carols sing,
And fill the air with music sweet,
  These voices of the Spring.

Each creature breathes a fresher air,
  And feels a vigorous life
Renew the courses of its blood
  Unto a healthful strife;

And merry flash the silver gleams
From brook and waterfall,
Where Naiads, bearing rustic urns,
To one another call.

For once again the globe has rolled
About the vast inane,
And viewed the mansions of the Sun
In his untracked domain;
On every side with glory clothed
Their fires flame fierce and far,
And pierce the darkness of the void,
And gild the utmost star.

And once again the Spring returns
With blithe and happy face;
Green are her garments, and her form
Is flushed with youthful grace;
Touched by her wand the flow'rets bloom,
And all the fields look gay,
The air is rife with murmurings
Throughout the balmy day.

O life of man! whose tale of years
In quick succession told
Seems but a passing dream, gone by
Ere yet 'tis half unrolled.
Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter make
A transient, fleeting show,
Year after year, in changeless round,
The seasons come and go.

Yet though our Summer days be past,
And Autumn days be gone,
While Winter's chilly sun looks down
Upon a heart forlorn,
Still through the chambers of the soul
The words of promise ring,
That from the winter of our age
Shall rise a joyful Spring.

FALLING LEAVES

Leaves that fall
From the boughs
When the autumn breezes call,
Faded are ye
From your prime,
Gone your verdant
Beauty of the summer time.

Then ye fluttered
Gay and lightsome
As ye felt the zephyrs blow,
While the lover
To his mistress
Whispered on the grass below.

Birds their carols
Sweetly warbled,
Spirits of the viewless air,
Darting hither,
Flying thither,
Roaming lightly, here and there.

Insects humming,
Dully thrumming,
Murmuring their little tunes,
Tunes erratic,
Odd, ecstatic,
Mystical as Northern runes.

Sunbeams fed ye,
Winds caressed ye,
And ye drank the golden light,
While the hedgerows
And the meadows
Were with summer raiment dight.

With strong pulses
And impulses
Drawn from out the throbbing earth
Rich your life was,
Full and sensuous,
Quivering with subtle mirth.

Now the sombre
Clouds assemble
On the wings of Autumn borne
From the regions
Where the tempests
Make the harried world forlorn.

And your hapless,
Withered, sapless
Forms are from the branches whirled,
Their souls being
Sadly fleeing
Ghostlike to another world.

THE NEW ZEALAND SHEPHERD'S REVERIE

In my cabin on the mountain side,
Where the sheep lie here and there,
And the screams of the kaka ride
On the cool, nocturnal air,
I muse by the wood-fed fire,
Whose red flames flicker and play,
And they waken a strange desire
For things that are far away.

For the cities of the grand old land
Outspread 'neath the Polar star,
Where the mansions and palaces stand,
And the stately promenades are;
Where the multitudes pass in a throng,
All manner of human life,
Like a sea that rolls ever along,
A weird and wonderful strife.

For there, in the fields of human thought,
Grows the harvest of the mind,
The golden corn is with richness fraught,
Yet still 'tis with tares combined;

The hall may ring with the merry dance,
  The corridor sound with glee,
But the bell oft tolls when death's swift lance
  Strikes full at misery.

I long for the sound of Sabbath chimes,
  For the abbey's pious hymn,
That fills the aisles with its glorious rhymes,
  Like songs of seraphim ;
The windows limned by the men of old,
  With many a tale of grace,
The carven tombs of warriors bold,
  Who sleep in the sacred place.

I long to behold the ships sail past,
  Their white sails bellying free,
While from their steep bows are hurled and cast
  The foaming waves of the sea,
And the steadfast course the steamer takes,
  Though the winds and tempest drive,
The roaring surge from its deck it shakes,
  As if 'twere a thing alive.

And I would gaze on the armies pranked
  In the pride and pomp of war,
Their guns and horses in order ranked
  For the battle seen afar ;
Their bosoms beat with the hope of fame,
  With the frenzy of the fight ;
They revel in front of the cannon's flame,
  In a wild and fierce delight.

But I wake from my musings again,
I open my cabin door,
Silence prevails through the starry main,
Silence on mountain and moor;
The world has fled from my famished gaze,
Deep solitude is my lot,
Yet oft amid fancy's pleasant maze
My hermit life is forgot.

EVENING MUSINGS

I LOVE the evening, when the shadows creep
And slowly lengthen o'er the grass-clad hill,
When winds are hushed, and to the ear there comes
The soothing murmurs of some little rill;

Then pensive thoughts arise, and half-regrets,
With memories of things that might have been
If we had garnered fully of our days
And Fortune's smiles amid the clouds had seen;

And reveries of past and happy hours
On whose delights we set but little store,
But now the fashion of their bloom becomes
A wealth of beauty not discerned before.

A single star looks down with radiance mild
As through Heaven's darkening canopy it peers,
The herald of a countless host whose eyes
Have watched the Earth through immemorial years.

They travel o'er the ether's pathless fields
That lead to regions of infinity,
Their courses and the phases of their orbs
Are interwoven with man's destiny.

Their fates we know not, as we know not ours,
And while they on majestic orbits roll
Impelled by some resistless power they move
Unceasingly towards a distant goal.

Could we but read the volume of the skies
And learn the secrets of its ancient lore,
We should grow rich with wisdom of the wise
And hear the echo of the wondrous roar

That burst from Chaos when the suns were made
And with their planets sought the mighty void,
While through the boundless spaces of the deep
The hosts of seething nebulæ deployed.

These are but musings, yet vague questionings
Incessant surge within the restless brain;
Creation's mystery we strive to pierce,
Yet still a mystery it doth remain.

The evening falls apace; the daylight wanes,
And as the shades descend our thoughts are filled
With that mild sadness which is half a joy,
An essence from the heart's dead flowers distilled.

The moth on noiseless wing flits here and there,
And many an insect from its snug retreat
Comes forth to welcome with a gentle hum
The night approaching with reluctant feet.

The shades grow deeper, and as day departs
The varied ranks of men their dwellings seek;
Some enter in the mansions of the great,
And some the humble cottage of the weak.

The hunter makes his camp beside the stream,
And rests awhile from danger or from toil,
He cooks the meal which his own hands have won,
And counts the trophies of his antlered spoil.

The last pale gleam of cheerful day is gone,
Night spreads its sombre mantle over all;
And blessed sleep, from its enchanted urn,
An opiate on the weary mind lets fall.

LITTLE THINGS

LITTLE islets sleeping
'Mid the purple sea,
Round their borders creeping
Waves lap dreamily.
Floats the seabird slowly
O'er the headland green,
Cloudlets drifting lowly
Here and there are seen.

Little stars that cluster
In the ebon sky,
Shining with calm lustre,
Shining cheerily;
Lamps of Hope that glisten
Through the night profound,
When the ear doth listen
But discerns no sound.

Little waves that ripple
O'er the tropic sea,
When the zephyrs dimple
Ocean silently;
Far beneath lie scattered
Bones of seamen brave
O'er the sea-floor battered,
Bones without a grave.

LITTLE THINGS

Little sunbeams glancing
Through the forest dark,
Tinge with hues entrancing
Moss, and leaf, and bark;
So gay fancies flutter
Through the hearts of men,
Make a little summer,
Then depart again.

Little insects darting
All the pleasant day,
Gauzy wings vibrating
In the sunlight gay,
O'er the meadows fragrant
Flaps the butterfly,
O'er the waters stagnant
Hawks the dragonfly.

Little birds that flutter
Through the rustling leaves,
Your sweet voices utter
Blithest melodies.
When the cold Earth blushes
'Neath morn's rosy light,
From each throat there gushes
Trills of gay delight.

Little baby, breathing
With thy breath so sweet,
Bright eyes mildly peeping
On the world they greet,

LITTLE THINGS

Little thoughts and fancies
  Stir thy petty brain,
Infantile romances
  Come and go again.

Little world enchanting,
  Child of ancient time,
Through the ether speeding
  Robed in clouds sublime,
Bearing with thee proudly
  Forces marvellous,
Yet an atom only
  In the Universe.

THE FLOWER GATHERER

LINGERING, lingering,
Sweetly lingering,
Long while ago we roamed adown the vale,
The ever-sunny vale,
The glowing tinted vale,
Of passioned Youth immersed in golden air,
While joyful bloom Hope's gayest flowerets there.
The dancing hours,
The jocund hours,
Come blithe along encrowned with myrtle leaves,
Encrowned with myrtle leaves.
And Psyche sweeps the harp with fingers fair,
The harp whose tones,
Whose trembling tones,
Come melancholy out the caves of thought,
The sad-voiced caves of thought,
Where recollections dim lie thickly stored.
Dear Idalie,
Sweet Idalie,
And I roamed down the many-scented vale;
Dear Idalie
Of starlike eyes that sparkled 'neath the robe,
The undulating robe,
The glossy raven robe,
Of thick black hair that rippled like a stream
Adown two shoulders fair of polished ivory gleam,

Of pure reluctant face,
Of floating, dreamy face,
Where colours played like opal in the sun,
Or mountain snow when Night his work hath done.
Our light and misty feet,
Our gay, enchanted feet,
Greeted the flowers that bowed their courteous heads,
Their gay, bedeckèd heads,
Their dew-besprinkled heads,
For aye concealed behind an odorous mist.
Beneath a lilac blue,
That by a pure spring grew,
We sat us down and whispered like the bees,
The ever-roaming bees,
The calmly singing bees,
When loving 'midst the iris' mystic bowers.
Then Idalie far cast,
Her dazzling eyes far cast
Upon an old man gathering in the vale,
Far up the sunny vale,
The coloured flowers that drank the sunbeams there.
"Ah me!" she sadly said,
And bowed her dreamy head,
Like poppies on their bed,
"Ah me! Why comes the old man in this place,
This valley bright where reigneth love and grace,
Why comes he here to check the flowerets' bloom?"
"Heed not, my love," replied
I, as she sadly sighed,
"Heed not the old man's plucking tender flowers.
'Tis but a fancy strange,
An idle fancy strange,
Like old Anacreon's wearing rosy crowns."

Our charmèd lips then met,
Our blushing lips then met,
And straight we passed into Love's golden cloud
That every sense in wondrous mist doth shroud,
And Idalie,
Sweet Idalie,
Seemed but a flower whose drooping head hung down,
Whose drooping head hung down,
Like water lilies when they've told their love.
I gazed in ecstasy,
In rapturous ecstasy,
So rapturous that it froze my wishful tongue;
And while I speechless gazed
With flooding thoughts amazed,
A withered hand came grasping Idalie,
Poor Idalie,
And plucked my pretty flower ere I its fragrance breathed.

BROTHER AND SISTER

O BROTHER mine! toil on a little longer,
The crown of toil shall come to you some day,
The clouds shall pass, the sun reveal its brightness,
And all the world assume an aspect gay.

For ever in our ears as we march onwards
The drums of life resound with their deep roll,
Sometimes with lively din they wake the welkin,
Sometimes with muffled tones they stir the soul.

The deserts spread afar their drear expanses,
The mountains lift their frozen heads on high,
Yet through the flowery mead and pleasant woodland
The sparkling rivulet flows merrily.

O sister mine, why fall your tears in sorrow?
Why weep for that which brings a little pain?
The pain will pass like night into the morning,
And joy and gladness shall come back again.

The darkest clouds are but a transient curtain
Which veils awhile the blue ethereal sky,
Whose beauties soon shall greet our charmèd vision,
Its tender glories calm the troubled eye.

BROTHER AND SISTER

And ye who, by the lot of Fate remorseless,
  Are made to toil in sombre ways alone,
Who deem your lives a bitter woe and burden,
  And your sad destiny for aye bemoan,

Let your despondent hearts remain unshaken,
  Unceasingly revolves Fate's restless wheel,
Upspring the lowly from their humble posture,
  The proud from their exalted station reel.

The world stays not, but in a long mutation
  All things upon its breast suffer a change,
Upon the gamut of mankind Time's fingers
  In endless play and alternation range.

O brother mine! grieve not for labours wasted,
  O sister dear! weep not for love o'erthrown;
The fragments of a thousand human idols
  Adown the path of life are thickly strown.

Believe not that Life's blossoms have departed
  Because its bitter fruit has touched your tongue;
Once more the tree shall bloom, and its sweet fragrance
  O'er your rejuvenated hearts be flung.

THE SIRENS

With rhythmic pulse the ocean rose and fell
Its soul responding to a whispered rune,
The stars were melting in a tender air,
And Venus glowed beside the crescent moon;
The waves rolled freshly on a rugged shore
Where islets rising from the ocean's floor
Wild craggy peaks and spacious caves upbore.

Then blushed the sky at the sweet kiss of dawn,
And night evanished like a pleasant dream,
The morning breezes from the Orient blew
And made light ripples o'er the ocean stream;
A raucous clamour from the seabirds rose
From rocky ledge and cave where, safe from foes,
They, through the summer night, had sought repose.

A restless vigour hovered in the air,
The beating of an unseen angel's wings,
A messenger that bade the soul prepare
To raise its vision to sublimer things;
Upon the land a mellow lustre fell,
A lustre gracious as the lights that well
From the seraphic face of Raphael.

Slow to the ear a languid music crept,
It was not all of Earth, nor yet of Heaven,
A rapturous lullaby that charmed the sense,
And stirred the blood with an entrancing leaven.
Two voices mingled in the dulcet strain,
One clear and full, one murmuring like the main;
Who lists them once must list to them again.

No mortal man who hears that wondrous song
The throbbings of his troubled heart can stay,
Its pinions flutter for a distant bower
And struggle for a region far away;
Where pleasure laps and laps, but still the spring
That yields delight its buoyant breast doth fling
And bubbles up with joyous blustering.

And while the chanting of the voices sweet
Suffused the air with matchless ecstasy
A ship from out the azure welkin came
With drowsy sails that drew it sluggishly;
Its mariners were thinking of their wives
And children watching till the ship arrives,
And the fond pleasures of their wedded lives.

The sensuous melody with soft embrace
The sailors' rugged spirits did enfold,
Till deeper chords were touched; a sudden tide
Replete with strange emotions through them rolled:
Wives, children, homes, from memory passed away,
Lost 'mid the strains of that seductive lay
Whose thrilling tones acclaimed the rising day.

THE SIRENS

The dolphin arched its back, and wallowed deep,
A welcome pilot to the unseen choir;
The vessel followed in the dolphin's wake
And to the islets drifted nigh and nigher;
It answered not, nor yielded to its helm,
But glided slowly to the Sirens' realm,
Where song the throne of reason doth o'erwhelm.

No bark has ever yet within that whirl
And frenzied play of harmonies been drawn
And sailed again the sea, or shook the wave
From its deep sides when on the tempest borne,
Save that immortal galley which was sung
By Homer in the days when men were young,
And through the world Ulysses' fame had rung.

The vessel quivered, and its broken hull
In scattered fragments on the shore lay strown.
No more the ship shall ride the ocean wave
Or anchor where the hollow surges moan;
The crew, enslaved on that enchanted isle,
Forgot their homes nor cared for freedom while
The Sirens' song their senses did beguile.

The ocean leaped and licked the rugged crags,
The seabirds mewed with melancholy cry,
The sun with blazing torch his course pursued
Across the concave of the summer sky;
His beams fell full on many a heap of bones
That bleaching lay upon the rugged stones
Regardless of the Sirens' luscious tones.

Their spirits once, upon the fateful Earth,
  Awhile took on man's shape and destiny,
They lived and loved, rejoiced, and suffered woe,
  Careless of what their future fate might be,
    Now their grim skeletons upon the ground
    In undistinguishable heaps were found;
    The sad sea wailed a requiem around.

For all who list the Sirens' song must pay
  An ample guerdon for their joyous hours,
From glowing dreams of happiness and love
  They sudden pass into Death's gloomy bowers,
    Where sun, nor moon, nor stars, nor light are seen,
    Nor e'er a single blade of living green,
    Where morn and eve are not, nor day between.

IDUNA

FAIR-HAIRED Iduna sat, in robes of sheen,
Upon a mossy throne, in forest green,
Where northern sunlight makes a Norseman's day
And northern moonbeams through pine foliage stray.
Her face serene a noble soul expressed
By lofty thoughts and sentiments caressed,
Yet lurking low beneath her eye's soft lid
A woman's love and tenderness lay hid.
Beside her feet a wondrous casket stood
Fashioned in strange design of Eastern wood,
Rich wreaths of gold its ebon panels bound
While carven figures made procession round
About its cincture, which an Indian graved,
Plying his art beneath the banyan's shade.
Nor were the treasures which it held unfit
In such a rich receptacle to sit;
Profusely heaped the casket inly bore
Apples of perfect shape and size galore—
Smooth yellow skins, with just a tinge of red,
That lay reposing on a leafy bed,
Such apples as were gathered from the trees
That grew in soil of the Hesperides,
When oft the gods took pleasure on the Earth
And oft spoke love to maids of human birth.
This precious fruit exhaled a fragrant scent
That to the frame a lusty vigour lent,

A juice profuse like purest nectar flowed
When tooth or knife incised the yielding globe;
And he who ate this fruit forthwith became
Endowed with ardour like a glowing flame,
A fuller life looked from the brightened eyes
And vigour flushed the tired faculties.
The deities who dwell with mighty Thor
And share the splendours of the god of war
Yet weary grow, and feel their strength abate,
Through constant effort in the strenuous state,
Oft sought Iduna, and the fruit that she
Dispensed with generous hospitality,
So that, with th' ecstatic juice inspired,
Their frames might be with ardent vigour fired,
Their youth renewed, their spirits flushed and strong,
Might bear them onward through the ages long.
These visitors divine had each his own
Illustrious bearing, and 'twas his alone;
The eyes of some were like the opal sea
When in the sun it welters peacefully;
And some had brows like to the thunder cloud
Before the lightning issues from its shroud;
Some wore the visage of the seraph mild,
Man's wisdom blent with frankness of the child;
Of some the voices were as pleasant rills
Trickling adown the slopes of sunny hills.
Such are the forms the gods assume when they,
Descending from the regions far away,
Awhile dwell on the dædal globe and make
Its sombre mountains and dark forests take
A transient beauty from the trailing foam
Of glory coming from the gods' bright home.

But these are not the presences that grace
Valhalla's halls where Odin's throne has place,
Whose shapes would be unseen by mortal eye
Could it to these ethereal regions spy—
The essences of beings uncreate
Unlike in form to creatures incarnate.
Iduna, ne'er refusing, gave to each
Proud god who asked her in celestial speech
One apple—one alone sufficed to fill
The veins with virtue, safe from Nifihel ;
Nor by her bounty lessened was the store
Of wondrous fruit the ebon casket bore,
For, lo ! replenished from some secret tree,
Whose sap is flushed with life most copiously,
The casket held the same, nor more, nor less,
Whate'er might be Iduna's lavishness,
Iduna's self could change not nor abate
The portion given by the hand of Fate.

DELPHI

When the Delphic priestess, fired
By revealings strange inspired,
Felt an occult knowledge break
In her trembling soul, and shake
With the breathings of its flame
Every fibre of her frame,
Then with voice prophetic she
Spoke winged words of destiny—

From the sacred tripod throne
Uttered lore of things unknown,
Counselled rulers of the State,
Told the stern decrees of Fate,
Dark her sayings oft, and dim,
Perplexing the heart of him
Who, pursuing fortune's maze,
Sought to learn its devious ways.

Thus the gods communed with men
In the far-off ages when
The weird rustling of the oak
In Dodona's forests spoke
Words of portent to the seer,
Whispering to his inward ear
What the fateful web would be
Woven by the Sisters Three.

But these oracles are mute,
Silent as a broken lute,
Hill and grove no more are trod
By the feet of wandering god ;
Never comes a word or sign
Or from cavern, or from shrine,
Giving counsel or relief
To the seeker in his grief.

Yet the Earth still throbs with life,
And the forests still are rife
With murmurings vague and dree,
Breathings of divinity ;
And the mountains, rising high,
Mingle with the sacred sky ;
And the swiftly rolling stream
Passes like a troubled dream.

For this globe is as of yore,
Clothed about with hidden lore,
In its heart it doth rehearse
Secrets of the Universe ;
Man alone hath suffered change,
For his fretful mind doth range
Here and there, on ceaseless quest,
Seeking where it may be blest.

Lo ! the knowledge which he gains
Is replete with many pains ;
While the faith has now grown dim
That beheld the seraphim ;

And the heroes that were born
In Creation's early dawn,
These he deems but fancies vain,
Phantoms of the seething brain.

Yet shall come again to men,
Sudden rushing to their ken,
Light and power of wondrous things
Borne from Heaven on mighty wings;
And the mists of doubt shall roll
From man's clear, enlightened soul,
Till he sees the world with eyes
Lit with wisdom of the wise.

A STORY OF CRACOW *

In Cracow's ancient city
From many a steeple tolled
A chime of rue and pity
That through the spring air rolled;
With folk the streets were surging
All clothed in garb antique,
A common impulse urging
The city's square to seek;
The day was bright and glorious,
A day to make men glad,
But voices spoke dolorous,
And every face looked sad.
What deed had bred this mournful mood
And stirred the thronging multitude?

There came with the port of a warrior bold
A youth whose attire was enriched with gold,
Though his heart was sore his mien was proud,
And he heeded not the sorrowing crowd.
A murmur rose like the voice of the breeze
When it lightly sweeps through the leaf-clad trees
As he passed on his way to the place where stood
The headsman dread, with his sombre hood:
For the sin that he sinned they deemed no crime,
But the gallant deed of a soul sublime.

* From Sienkiewicz's "Knights of the Cross."

He challenged the foe to his country's weal
To a fight to the death with the deadly steel,
But, alas for his zeal, the foeman came
With the sacred shield of an envoy's name,
Though his rank was hid from the youth when he
Sought to fight with the foe in chivalry.
The Knight of the Cross was on vengeance bent,
And he claimed from the king to whom he was sent
That the youth should pay with the price of his life
For the challenge he gave to mortal strife.
The monarch was just, and he spake the word,
Though his heart with rue for the youth was stirred.

With their crossbows strung marched the archer guard
And kept close ranked by the side of their ward,
For the people's wrath grew ever more loud
And a fell fire shone in the eyes of the crowd.
On Zbysso's right was the bishop who bore
The symbol of Christ whom men adore,
On his left was a clerk in vesture dun
Who carried the writ of doom to be done.
At length they came to the city's great square
And a scaffold frowned in its grimness there,
Then a shudder passed through the youth's tall frame,
But his courage glowed with a warmer flame,
Though he felt 'twas hard while so young to die
On a blithe spring morn, 'neath a sunny sky.

But, lo! who is there by the place of doom,
Like a silver star that pierces the gloom?
'Tis a maiden clad in a robe of white,
A long veil concealing her face from sight,

Her hair is bedecked with a wreath of rue
Her wealth of hair, of a golden hue.
The Pan of Taczow by the maiden stands,
A knight whose fame rolls through many lands;
'Tis few with him can in strength compare,
Fewer still would the storm of his anger dare;
Complete is his knowledge of customs old
By the people cherished like precious gold.
The youth on the maid looked with brightening eye,
But deemed she came only to see him die.
Though maiden and youth had not plighted troth,
Yet Love's silent tokens were known to both.
To clasp her he sought, but backward she stepped
While sorrow and love into her eyes leapt.
"He is mine! mine!" loudly Danusia said,
And cast her long veil upon his proud head.
The deed was thus done, but a few moments passed
Ere the people its purport and meaning grasped,
Then rose a wild cry from the joyful crowd.
"He is hers! he is hers!" were the plaudits loud.
The city was filled with the glad refrain,
It swelled in wild raptures again and again,
For a custom of Poland was law that forbade
The death of a man if haply some maid
At the steps of the scaffold would claim him to wed,
Thus should he be saved from punishment dread.

Yet doubtful it seemed if this gallant youth
Could liberty gain by Danusia's ruth;
The law must be read by the stern-faced man,
The city keys' guardian, the castellan.
So to the old fort in procession there went
The archers with crossbows in hand and unbent,

The maiden walked slow by the young man's side,
The people flowed on like a human tide,
A din and a buzz filled the sunny air,
And pleasure was reigning everywhere.
The castle was reached, and the Pan was told
How appeal had been made to custom old,
And the knight was asked forthwith to decree
That Zbysso was purged of his guilt and free.
Grave looked the proud knight, and he said such law
For peasants was made, but 'natheless he saw
Good reason why scope of its happy grace
Should be made complete so it might embrace
The noble likewise ; for all men are one,
All cherish sweet life and death's portal shun.
Danusia he blessed and the noble youth
Whose life she had saved by her tender ruth.

HYPATIA

The gods my fathers worshipped shall be mine,
My knee shall never bow before the shrine
Of some strange deity, who dwells in spheres
Remote from human passions, hopes, and fears,
But mighty Jove, whose thunder shakes the skies,
And Juno proud, Minerva calm and wise,
Apollo radiant with divinity,
Love's raptures flowing from Aphrodite ;
To these immortals, and their peers who dwell
In the celestial fields of asphodel,
My reverence is due ; for though they reign
O'er realms to which no mortal can attain,
Free from the sufferings that afflict our days,
And moving perfect in their various ways,
Yet they look down on men with kindly eyes,
And with our many frailties sympathise.
They render aid, nor ask exchange or price,
To those who vows fulfil, and offer sacrifice ;
And sometimes, too, the gods have walked the Earth,
Revealed themselves to us of mortal birth,
A splendid radiance made their presence known,
Some gleamings brought from Jove's illustrious throne,
And they have wooed of men the daughters fair,
Besought their love, and gave caresses rare.

Thus spake Hypatia, born amid the wrack
Of ancient faiths, nigh dead yet living still,
When men believed no more their time-worn gods,
And yet half feared them, while on the horizon,
Dense with their doubts and fears, uprose the gleam
Of the pure Christian morn.

What cold and bloodless God is this whom we
Are told is Lord of Heaven, and Earth, and Sea;
Who reigns alone, in changeless solitude,
Where angel nor archangel dare intrude?
For him the years are not, nor sun, nor moon,
Nor space, nor shape, nor late, nor soon;
Fate hath no power o'er His divinity,
He sits sublime amid infinity,
What recks He of the petty woes that make
Man's life a toilsome pilgrimage and break
His noble spirit with the ceaseless fret
And moil of cares that he would fain forget,
So that his soul, upborne on buoyant wings,
Might rise to heights of fine imaginings?

From Palestine there comes a story wild
How from a birth obscure a wondrous Child
Replete with wisdom, full of eloquence,
With heart o'erflowing with benevolence,
Led thousands captive by the words that fell
From His warm lips, and oft some miracle
Attested that His life derived its breath
From regions where no being yields to death:
And yet He died; upon a cross of shame
By torments racked and torn His quivering frame
Gave up the ghost; He seemed but one of three
Despisèd men who died on Calvary.

But, lo! to light the tomb its tenant gave
His mighty spirit issuing from the grave,
Clad in the form it wore when doomed to die
Uprose to Heaven in glorious majesty,
For God Himself, they say, assumed this guise
Descending basely from the upper skies.
By such mad fables common folk are taught
The vile alone are worthy a God's thought,
The world and all its pleasures are but sin,
To be contemned by those who Heaven would win.
Such fictions humour those who lack the sense
To view the world in its magnificence,
The pomp of man, the strifes of chiefs and kings,
While Nature beats her rich, ambrosial wings;
Be mine the gods who bid us live and love,
Forgive our failings, and whose passions move,
Who weave a golden thread through our dark years,
And ever mingle hope with saddest tears.

THE MONK

A SOLILOQUY

ONCE more the fervent sun, descending low,
Has crossed the arch of heaven, its day's work done;
Profusely scattered have its blessings been
And manifold; the sap in plant and tree
Has flowed more quickly; the bursting flower
Unclosed and brightened into perfect bloom,
Its scent perfuming all the languid air;
Each animated thing, from the poor worm
That revels in the warm and pleasant soil
To man himself, the prince and lord of all,
Has felt that life has joys as well as pains;
Its golden beams have bathed the rich man's home
Replete with costly pomp and luxury,
And lit the fœtid dwellings of the poor;
The world has been the better, and the orb
Diffused a flood of gladness o'er the land.

Soon will the vesper bell clang loud and shrill,
And then with solemn step and reverent gait
I and my fellow hermits will again,
As we have done a thousand times before,
Repeat with jaded minds the well-known prayers,
And offer weary worship unto God,
But none can pride him on a useful day
Or fellow man made happier by his aid.

When first my soul was filled with strong desire
To yield its every fibre unto God,
And live a chaste, pure life, devoid of care
For mundane things and sordid, that make dim
The inward sight, whereby we can discern
The slopes that lead up to infinity,
I deemed that, once within these sacred walls,
By fasting, prayer, and holy rites profound,
By meditation and long silences,
My soul at length would reach a nobler plane
And learn the wisdom of celestial lore.
But with the passing years the pious glow
Has waned and waned until it warms no more,
And in its stead the hand of apathy
Rests on my callous breast. The dull monotony,
The daily changeless round of rites and prayer,
The petty faults foreshadowing penances,
The listless hours, the drear seclusion from
The strenuous life by homely mankind led,
Have numbed the faculties that bore me on
The wings of inspiration.

Yet sometimes, in the calm and starry night
When I in raptured contemplation plunge
My inmost being, I am upward borne
Unto the portals of the Infinite;
There I inhale the perfect air that feeds
The glorious seraphim and cherubim,
Attendants in the presence of my God.
The world is gone; forgotten, like a dream
That flies our memory at the risen day,
And for a few short hours I seem to drink
Sweet draughts of joys celestial that may be

Mine in rich flood for all eternity,
If I but in this life dispart myself
From all that men most love and most desire.
But man is prone to err, and it may be
That Heaven's most cherished blessings are not given
To hermit lone or pallid anchorite ;
Perchance the stress of battle must be borne,
The many ills and pains of human life,
The strivings with temptation, and that we
Must feel the throb of human hopes and fears,
Before the soul, emerging from its clay,
Can gain its fullest power.

The vesper bell is tolling, and its voice
Bids me attend my evening orisons,
It calls me back to Earth and doctrines true.
What thoughts unrighteous have besmirched my soul
And caused the phantom of a doubt to rise ?
My faith is shivering on the brink that hangs
Over the deep abyss of unbelief ;
Unfaithful to the Church have I become,
Though but a moment, still apostate I,
For this strange sin some penance must atone.

OMDURMAN

THE war drums beating loud and strong,
The bugles sounding clear and long,
Aroused the host which lay beside
The mighty Nilus' ancient tide,
Near Omdurman.

Each man had held the night in scorn
And lusted for the lingering morn,
In hope that he might then descry
The standards of the enemy,
Near Omdurman.

Briton and fellah, Soudanese,
Mustering in ranks and squadrons these,
Avengers all—for Gordon died,
His blood diffused its crimson tide,
Near Omdurman.

The lurid sun, with aspect dire,
Hung like a fateful ball of fire,
The portent of a day of doom
For Khalifa and old Khartoum,
Near Omdurman.

In battle order grimly set,
Gleamed rifle and keen bayonet,
From horseman's lance and sabre bright
Resplendent shone the ruddy light,
Near Omdurman.

Far off the Dervish army spread
A line of warriors, fierce and dread,
Advancing from their desert home,
A raging sea of human foam,
Near Omdurman.

Wild valour all their legions thrilled,
The Mahdi's faith their bosoms filled,
Fanatic dreams their souls inspired,
With hopes of Heaven their ranks were fired,
Near Omdurman.

Into a tempest, bearing death,
They rushed, and drank its lethal breath,
A storm of iron and of lead
That from the British ranks had sped,
Near Omdurman.

Fierce volleys from the rifles broke,
The loud artillery, veiled in smoke,
Impelled its missiles from afar,
The engines dread of modern war,
Near Omdurman.

Bold charging at the Dervish host,
The Lancers seemed an instant lost,
Yet, though the battle wildly surged,
They victors from the strife emerged,
Near Omdurman.

Undaunted stood the fellaheen,
  Nor shunned the foemen's onset keen,
The thralls of sunless ages claim
  The warrior's title and his fame,
    Near Omdurman.

Nor recked the Mahdi's host of death,
  Nor feared the cannon's fiery breath;
Their legions sought the glorious fray,
  And melted like a dream away,
    Near Omdurman.

O souls heroic, who have fled
  Unto the regions of the dead,
For right cause fighting, or for wrong,
  Your valour claims a place in song
    For Omdurman.

THE CITY

I

To him whose mind with restless fervour plays
The city breathes enchantment. Streams of life
Flow ceaselessly along the spacious ways
Where throbs, and throbs, the pulse of civic strife.
A changing picture is the multitude,
A fleeting panorama of the gay,
The sad, the proud, the meek, the bad, the good,
The rich, the poor, all mingling as they may.
The splendid motor-car goes flaming by,
The lowly barrow, bearing rustic gains,
And many a vehicle attracts the eye,
The smart barouche, the sluggish-rolling wains;
Deep is the hum that fills the busy air,
A tide of men, and movement everywhere.

II

Oft has the youth, by London's charms beguiled,
Sought fame and fortune in the wondrous town,
His full heart palpitating with a wild
Tumultuous expectation, beating down
The quiet voice of prudence, whispering low.
Splendid the vision while the glamour lasts,
With sudden fire his aspirations glow
As on the stirring scene his glance he casts;

But comes a day when solitude itself
Seems populous to that most dreary waste
Of careless faces, carven as on delf,
Like some procession from a far-off place;
So march the waves upon the ocean main,
Wave passes wave, and ne'er is seen again.

III

From the great city rises for ever
Wails from the suffering, wails of distress,
Sighs that are born of an idle endeavour
To wrest from life's turmoil a brief happiness;
Offspring begot of the slough and the slime,
Breathing the mists of a foul degradation,
Bred by ill fortune to manifold crime,
Sapping the virtue and strength of the nation.
Fierce is the hum that reveals the emotion
Shaking the depths of the dark human tide,
So heaves and falls the breast of the ocean
Ere hurricanes over its billows ride.
When shall Heaven smile upon a city fair
Where every man can breathe a pleasant air?

IV

The city is a hearth where thought fires thought
And mind communes with mind; ideas awake,
Then o'er the world a wondrous change is wrought,
And with impulses new the nations shake;
Old idols fall, and fresh beliefs like rain
Bedew men's hearts, and lo! the seeds
Of ampler being that have dormant lain
Grow up and satisfy their higher needs.

Sometimes emerges from the city's fen
A noble soul, that like a splendid star
Illumes the weary path of weary men
And shows the regions where the seraphs are;
Forth from the city flames the torrid word
And by its might the torpid globe is stirred.

V

The stately city breathes magnificence
With square, and mansion, lofty monument,
The columned hall, and many a dome immense,
Proud architecture's rich embodiment;
Tall spires and towers ascend from ancient fanes
Where carven roof looks on a footworn floor,
The sun illumes the many-coloured panes
That keep the memory of brave men of yore;
'Tis here that Art unfolds her glorious wing
And all the beauties of her form displays,
Here flourish graces manifold that spring
From vanity and keen desire for praise;
Majestic is the city, and its brain
Is ever toiling, like the restless main.

VI

Night falls upon the city; but the hush
And quietude that sits upon the country-side
When day is over, and the sun's red flush
Yields to the silver of the moon's calm tide,
Prevails not here; but the fierce heat
And eager din of commerce die away;
More slowly do the city's pulses beat,
As mod'rate winds succeed the storm's wild fray,

THE CITY

With artificial light the highways gleam,
O'er many a mile the lucid shafts are sent;
The people pass, a broken, scattered stream,
Some toiling still, but more on pleasure bent.
The dragon sleeps; the stars begem the sky
That hides the bosom of Eternity.

GOLD

Gold ! gold ! gold ! gold !
  Lure of the woman, lure of the man,
If the full-measured tale of thy deeds were told
  Like a pennant 'twould be
  The eye could scarce scan,
From planet to planet in length unrolled.

Palace of Eblis, built of ore
  Won by remorseless toil,
Golden each chamber, golden each door,
  While the sinister flames
  In a mad turmoil
Gleam on golden roof and on golden floor.

Lurid with fire of passions aglow,
  Fed by the lust of gold,
Through the halls of the palace ceaseless flow
  The souls that in life
  To Mammon were sold,
Like unhallowed flocks they roam to and fro.

Sad-featured maidens, hapless brides,
  To thy garish altar led,
Fettered with links that love derides,
  To thy service bound
  And a loveless bed,
O'er their wasted lives a shadow abides.

Filled with thy frenzy, flushed with hope
To grasp a great meed of gold,
In the depths of the mountains the miners grope,
'Mid the red sun's heat
And the frost king's cold
They wrench the bright ore from its stony cope.

Mansions and cities built with gold
Sitting in golden air,
Keen-eyed the men their places hold,
Watchful they gaze,
Each one from his lair,
Seeking to double his store of gold.

Clashing of brain, clashing of wit,
From the storm and stress arise
Vapours whose wreaths o'er the pure earth flit
Like fogs from the marsh
That hide the blue skies
While the soul to the mire and the slime is knit.

Beacon that beckons, ruddy hand
That guides unto deeds of blood,
The covetous soul to murder is fanned
When the lust of gold
Like a burning flood
Fills the brain till the scheme of the crime is planned,

And he goes on the terrible path
That is lit by thy flame,
Nor dreams of the coming of wrath
When the ghosts shall rise
And the winds proclaim
The vengeance that follows as sin's aftermath.

Slave is poor man to thy cruel arm,
  Toiling at thy behest,
Yet givest thou him full many a charm,
  A rich glowing life
  In luxury dressed,
Flushed with warm sun like the soul of the palm.

THE FIRE

THE fire burns bright; it glows and flames,
  Upshoot the yellow spires;
They leap and leap, with merry fling,
  Like gratified desires;
The smoke ascends the chimney tall
  In black and gloomy whirls,
Till, resting on the cold night air,
  It floats in many swirls.

How cheerful gleams the merry blaze!
  It warms the laggard blood,
While through the veins the crimson stream
  Sweeps in a faster flood;
The mind is wrapped in sweet content,
  And pleasant visions rise
Of joyousness in days to come
  And happy memories.

Amid the burning embers red
  The splendid castles glow,
Turret, and keep, and barbican,
  As in the long ago,—

The knights live still; their armour gleams,
To each his squire and page,
They seek the joust and tournament
With glittering equipage.

The vision fades; and in its place
Another view succeeds:
Two armies ranged in hostile camps,
Brave men, with many steeds;
No armour wear they, nor is seen
Gay pomp or panoply,
But weapons dire, and soldier's garb
Of strict simplicity.

Amid the shadows of the night
Their watch-fires brightly gleam,
Thickly bestrewn o'er hill and dale
Like countless stars they seem;
Around the brands the soldiers lie
And snatch a brief repose
Before the bugle call shall bid
Them fall upon their foes.

The fire burns bright; the ruddy coals
Diffuse a grateful heat,
Upon the fender, at their ease,
Rest many slippered feet,
Gay converse flows, the jest goes round,
Thought hearkens unto thought,
The mirthful evening swiftly flies
With happiness full fraught.

THE FIRE

How cheery is the glowing fire
  That warms the home and hearth,
And makes the thorny way of life
  One hour a pleasant path!
Sometimes by its soft influence stirred
  Dreams upon dreams arise,
And nourished by the mind they grow
  Into realities.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

I

Bold Ponce de Leon, old with toil and care,
Sought vainly, sailing o'er the Spanish main,
For those blessed isles where springs a fountain rare
Whose flashing waters brought back youth again
To him whose frame, by rheumy age impaired,
Refused to give the strength that once made light
Of arduous labour, and great peril dared
Because in dangerous ways it took delight.
Long voyaged he o'er bright and sunny seas,
Viewed many a happy island in his quest,
He heard the fountain plashing in the breeze
And saw its radiance gleaming in the west,
Yet never rested foot upon the shore
Where time stands still, and youth reigns evermore.

II

Whence come these visions that awake desire
And stir the current of the sluggish blood,
Kindle imagination's sacred fire,
Arouse emotion's overwhelming flood ?
The fond belief that by some waters won
From springs that bubble in lands far away
We may escape the doom of darkness dun
The common lot that trammels human clay ;

Or gleams of golden towers in that fair town
That once on El Dorado's uplands rose
With gold and jewels glittering like a crown,
Where pleasure dwelt; and joy made sweet repose,—
Are these not symbols, floating from the sphere
Where truth is known, and bright realities appear?

A FANCY

A MAN there was, in the days of old,
  Who leapt through the stormy blast,
His eyes were bright with an elfish light,
  His form like a giant passed.

His home was where, in the far, far South,
  The streams of the lightnings play
That rise from the cold Aurora's bed
  Through the polar night alway.

He came with the hail and icy wind,
  Maybe with the driving snow,
With his spirit flushed the tempest fierce
  O'er the frozen sea did blow.

His soul was fed with the thoughts of years
  That grew in the polar waste
Where the grim, gaunt ribs of Earth lie bare
  By the feeble sun embraced.

He wandered oft o'er the wide, wide world
  Where the Southern ocean spread
Its surges blue o'er a wondrous space
  Where the giant whales are bred.

And the sailor feared who, in the gale,
Saw gleaming the elfish light
Of the ancient's eyes that swiftly passed
Through the dull, tempestuous night.

TROPIC ISLES

O ISLES that welter in the tropic sun
And feel the matchless fervour of his heat,
Whose floods descend when morning is begun
And vanish with the evening's flying feet.

About ye rolls the ocean in its pride,
Its waters azure as the summer sky,
And, swelling from its strong and restless tide,
A dithyrambic hymn unceasingly

Chants in low tones the music of the deep
That languid floats upon the perfumed air,
And everywhere delightful visions peep,
Green palms, gay flowers, and trees of foliage rare.

Here Nature looks her loveliest and her best,
And life is but a golden summer dream,
Sweet pleasure alternates with happy rest,
Days, months, and years with joyous idlesse teem.

Time ever lingers in these magic isles,
And mellow day succeeds to mellow day,
Each hour bestows a copious wealth of smiles
Ere passing in tranquillity away.

But sometimes roars the black and threatening cloud,
And lightning flames from Heaven's half-riven floor,
The rain descends in drenching floods, and loud
The unchained winds o'er isles and oceans roar.

Fierce blows the hurricane awhile, until
On wings of might it passes to its quest,
The herbage seems more green, more blithe the rill,
Then land and ocean sink again to rest.

The coral polyps on the boundless deep
With ceaseless labour raise their banks of stone,
Age after age they to the surface creep
Until the margins of the isle are shown.

Thus, formed by living creatures, sits the isle,
And soon upon its rugged reefs appear
The coco grove and many a palm, the while
The seafowl in their myriads hover near.

THE CORAL ISLE

I HEAR the crooning of the low-voiced surf
That rolls, and rolls, and rolls for evermore,
Softly it sinks upon the coral shore
As moonlight falls upon the grass-clad earth,
A tender glory mantling all the isle ;
The coco groves expansive shadows spread,
Lush life and careless happiness are wed,
All things the ardent senses do beguile ;
The brown kanakas in the surges play,
Or from their rude canoes seek passing prey.

The throbbing of the weary heart grows still
In this remote and half-primæval spot
Where toil and strife for wealth and power are not,
Nor endless task of climbing Mammon's hill.
A little speck it lies upon the sea,
Built by the tiny creatures of the deep
That age by age from the abysses creep
Until the work is borne triumphantly
Up to the eye and vision of the day
A monument for ever and for aye.

Soon night will come and stars illustrious gleam
Like flaming torches of a countless host
That, ranked along the Heaven's unmeasured coast,
Unto the clay-freed soul a welcome beam.

The veil of sleep athwart the isle will fall
And silence hover: though the drowsy ear
Perchance may in the distant darkness hear
Some wakeful bird unto its fellow call;
Sweet peace and rest; the wavelets slowly creep
Up the white strand; slumbers the tired deep.

A SKETCH

So roams the leopardess,
Black-spotted, tawny-skinned, and full of ire,
When home returning from the chase full flushed
With life and vigour, having feasted well,
And fiercely glad through bearing in her maw
Prime food for her young cubs, enters her cave
And finds the traces of the foe still there;
The passions of her bestial soul are lit,
And forth she rushes, driven by her wrath.
Fast o'er the hills she ranges till appear
The haggard rocks, bleak, old, and tempest-torn,
Naked of trees, or shrubs, or grass, or flowers,
Lorn and forgot save by the lonesome wind;
Then with a roar that shakes the icy air
She plunges down a vast and dread ravine
That yet is clothed with fresh and living trees,
Deeming that here the hated foe will be.
With soft and wicked feet she swiftly leaps
Upon the fallen leaves, then faster moves
With every bound, for, lo! the subtle scent
Of human foot makes her fierce nostril glow;
Each quivering leap is longer than the last,
Until, emerging on an open space,
She spies a hunter weary and most faint
Beneath the burden of her ravished cubs.

Hell gushes from her eyes; her strides o'erpass
Fourfold their common length; with muffled roar
The beast drives deep her fangs into the foe,
Who headlong falls, and from his neck wells out
The red blood gurgling with his warm, strong life.

THE DAYS OF ARCADY

In days of yore, when men were young,
And in their breasts sweet music rung,
Sweet music that from Heaven had sprung,
In days of Arcady.

A pastoral race, they knew not care,
But joyous breathed a healthful air,
And passed a lusty life and rare
In days of Arcady.

Ambition gnawed not with its tooth,
The mists of hate obscured not truth,
For men had love, and men had ruth,
In days of Arcady.

A warmer sunshine bathed the trees,
A fragrance scented every breeze,
And Nature, smiling, sought to please
In days of Arcady.

A lofty sky of deepest blue
Was flecked with clouds of golden hue,
Like angels flitting o'er the view,
In days of Arcady.

THE DAYS OF ARCADY

A mellow light suffused the Earth,
And hills, and vales, and plains gave birth
To trees and flowers of matchless worth
In days of Arcady.

And men, with souls responsive, heard
In voice of insect, beast, and bird,
The vibrant tones by Nature stirred,
In days of Arcady.

For, lo! the flames had scarce begun
To gleam in splendour from the sun
And through the firmament to run
In days of Arcady.

. . . . . .

Thus spake our fathers when they thought
The web of life with ill was fraught,
And gold was all, and love was naught,
Not as in days of Arcady.

Beguilèd by the subtle haze
Enveloping far-distant days
They thoughtless gave unmeasured praise
To days of Arcady.

And so, illustrious in our eyes,
The visions of the Past arise;
The fancied happiness which lies
In vales of Arcady.

The same sun shines, the warm winds blow,
The flowers troop forth in gorgeous show,
The waters sparkle as they flow,
As in the days of Arcady.

And lives as simple can be led,
And love to love can still be wed,
And Nature's bounties still are shed,
As in the days of Arcady.

The soul illumes with its own light,
And makes the world a sombre sight,
Or clothes it with a vesture bright
As in the days of Arcady.

THE SINGERS OF THE PAST

How sweet the voices that have sung
  In other days, in other years,
Whose breathings o'er the heart's strings played,
  The gamut of man's hopes and fears!
The tender echoes of their tones
  Still linger on, from age to age,
A ghostly music from the past,
  Which softly rustles life's sad page.

They sang the joys that men befall,
  The lover and his trusting maid,
The springtime and the rosy dawn,
  The rippling stream, the grateful shade;
The charm and pulse of buoyant youth
  When through the veins the strong desire
Of life, and love, and merry days,
  Courses apace like liquid fire.

Sometimes, inspired with warlike zest,
  They chanted in a lyric strain
The flood of battle rolling fierce,
  The hero for his country slain;
They brought the gods from their bright realms
  To range the Earth with fateful spears,
And slaughter hecatombs of men,
  And bathe the land in widows' tears.

Rich were these voices of the Past,
They sang a youthful world, not old,
With all the bloom upon its face,
And all its marvels yet untold;
Its fields were of a brighter green,
Its untracked seas a deeper blue,
Its birds rejoiced with sweeter lays,
All things were fresh, all things were new.

Oh could we have beheld this globe,
When first it sprang from sombre night,
And on its newly fashioned orb
Fell glimmerings of celestial light!
How glorious was the scene that broke
Upon the poet's vision when
He viewed the primal Earth, and saw
How mighty angels walked with men!

AN IDYLL

A RUSTIC cottage, roofed with thatch,
  A doorstep, polished clean and bright,
Upon the lozenged windows gleamed
  The redness of the evening light;
A fragrance loitered in the air,
  And, like a trilling bird elate,
A mother, young and very fair,
  Sang gaily by a little gate.

And singing thus, she knew not why,
  Save that a gay and choral mood
Had seized her and the music came
  Spontaneous like a merry flood,
She fondled her sweet offspring, and,
  Delighted with her blithe caress,
The baby with its tender hand
  Played laughing with an unbound tress.

His hair was golden, and his eyes
  Twinkled like two rejoicing stars
When from the world's dark edge ascend
  The splendid Moon and ruddy Mars;
So frolicked Eve, our mother great,
  Forgetting what had passed away,
Her child preferred to Eden's charms,
  'Twas thus with Abel she did play.

AN ASPIRATION

COULD we feel sure this life is but a stage,
The first approach unto an endless age
Of ampler being, where for weal or woe
The faculties perpetually will grow

And reach a fuller round of good or ill,
A river growing from a petty rill,
The finer to the finer senses knit,
The grosser to the grosser made more fit,

Our hearts would pulsate with a stronger beat;
And we should walk at ease on steadfast feet;
The mists would clear that now obscure the day,
And hide the tenor of our earthly way,—

As when a traveller who, with doubtful pace,
Walks on a road whose course he cannot trace,
And knows not what its distant goal may be,
Nor if it leads to joy or misery,

At length beholds, upon the highway's side,
The index that becomes a friendly guide,
And tells him what awaits his journey's end,
And to what bourne his weary footsteps tend:

Then sudden vigour spurs his jaded frame,
His mind enlightened views a certain aim,
No longer by vague hopes and fears perplexed,
His energies by flickering fancies vexed,—

So, through the tale of years that we call life,
With strange vicissitudes and sadness rife,
A faithful guide would aid our feeble sight,
The cloud by day, the pillared fire by night,

We should not wander in thought's devious ways,
Or seek to thread the world's unravelled maze,
Nor rack our souls with questions dull and grey,
Why bad men flourish and the good decay;

For with our inward sight made strong and clear,
Its gaze would pierce unto a broader sphere,
And view afar the palaces that lie
In the wide kingdoms of Infinity.

But we, alas! are left to grope 'mid dim,
Delusive shadows that conceal the rim
And round of Being, such as we it know;
The waters of Death's fateful river flow

In silence that hath never broken been,
And none is living who hath ever seen
If but one soul hath reached the farther shore
Of that dread stream that rolls for evermore.

THE BLIND RESTORED TO SIGHT

She never saw a mother's smile,
A father's kindly face,
The features of a friend suffused
With sympathetic grace,
But now she sees the light.

The orbs of her impotent eyes
Lacked lustre, and were cold,
Life's gleam was absent, nor by them
Was love or anger told,
But now she sees the light.

The wonders of the earth and sky
To her were but a name,
The glory of the ancient hills,
The sun's uprushing flame,
But now she sees the light.

She heard men speak of trees and flowers,
The ripples of the brook;
From phrases such as these her mind
No certain meaning took,
But now she sees the light.

The moving shadows of the woods,
The foamings of the surf,
Existed not for her; no more
Than daisies in the turf,
But now she sees the light.

Her world was not the world of men,
For, reft of one chief sense,
She knew a part, but not the whole,
Of its magnificence,
But now she sees the light.

The dark is past; the day is come,
Its luminous floodings roll;
The liberated faculties
Leap freely from the soul,
For now she sees the light.

And yet her vision does not rest
On things that daily greet
The eyes of men, of living men,
In whose veins pulses beat,
Though now she sees the light.

What views she, then? Nay, who can tell,
Or read the riddle plain
Behind the door which, entered once,
None can return again?
But she beholds the light.

THE RAILWAY TRAIN

WHAT sound is this that rumbles through the air
And mingles with the soughing of the breeze,
A sound that bids the list'ning ear prepare
For throbbings that will rise in louder keys?
'Tis the rolling, 'tis the rolling, of the train.

Nigh and nigher still it comes,
Like the beating of great drums;
For a moment dies the strain,
Then more loudly swells again,
'Tis the rolling, 'tis the rolling, of the train.

Till a full and strong vibration
Fills the air with animation,
And reverberating round
Spreads the volume of deep sound,
'Tis the roaring, 'tis the roaring, of the train.

With its sombre ensign floating,
Trails of smoke its course denoting,
Like a Titan in his haste
By Jove's thunders hotly chased
With its swift feet shod with lightning flies
the train.

THE RAILWAY TRAIN

Bearing onward in its madness
Freight of human joy and sadness,
In its keeping tightly grasped
Men and women's lives are clasped,
In the keeping of the rushing, roaring train.

On its iron pathway borne
From the night until the morn,
From the morn until the night,
Moving with impetuous might,
With its rushing and its roaring rolls the train.

When the moon and gay stars peer
Downward from the ebon sphere,
Through the gloom that hides the world
Flames a ruddy splendour hurled
From the full eye, bright and gleaming, of the train.

O'er the broad plain's meadows green,
Through the vale which lies between
Hills, and then in sinuous course
Mounting to the cataract's source,
Like a Destiny relentless rolls the train.

Where the city's busy strife
Wakes the hopes of human life,
Where the mart and crowded street
Make the pulse tumultuous beat,
Hitherwards, in royal progress, rolls the train.

THE RAILWAY TRAIN

By a mighty giant led—
From two potent forces bred,
Son of water and of fire,
Breathing deeply in his ire—
With its voice of muttered thunder,
Thrilling all the world with wonder,
On its way, its way resistless, rolls the train.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE

THE battle burns ; now flames, now sinks again ;
The youth puts on his armour for the fight,
Impatient for the conflict that shall gain
Him glory from the prowess of his might.
The noisy strifes of men bestir his blood,
Rejoicing at the clamour of their war,
Resistless rolls his spirit's ardent flood,
His thoughts on liberated pinions soar,
Confused his strugglings ; onset meets onset,
Some fall for aye ; some rise again, and hope
By hearts on final victory well set
With adverse fate successfully to cope.
So looms life's battle to the youth who sees
Fame's banner floating in the prosperous breeze.

When near life's end the man of years sedate
Emerging from the wild, tumultuous rout,
Half dazed, and moving with uncertain gait,
His warworn body clothed with scars about,
Looks back, and views the conflict hotly pressed,
While sounds the rumble of the human tide,
The grateful thought arises in his breast
That henceforth peace shall aye with him abide ;

And yet the battle and its arduous moil
  Made strong his manhood's fibre, and endued
It with the sap that springs from strenuous toil,
  And gave his being nobler amplitude;
Half-beaten, half-victorious, panting, he
Casts down his battered helm reluctantly.

A SIMILE

I HEARD the sound of a cataract
  That, rushing wild and free
From out its rocky prison, leaped
  To grateful liberty.
It seemed to me like some proud soul
  That, long in bonds confined,
Within a narrow channel pent
  Has chafed to meet its kind,

Till one glad day its strength is loosed,
  And then its 'prisoned powers
Well forth tumultuously and gleam
  In iridescent showers;
Thought follows thought in ceaseless rout
  As surge succeeds to surge,
And from the kindled faculties
  More vivid flames emerge.

THE HARVEST OF DAYS

In the harvest of days that are flown,
  In the harvest of days still to come,
We have reaped of the seed we have sown,
  We shall reap of our deeds the great sum;
For each deed that is righteous will bear
  The rich fruit of true goodness in time,
And each sin that is sinned will grow strong
  With the food that is drawn from the slime.

If we yield up our lives to the strife,
  The passionate yearning for gold,
The wild frenzy for lucre our hearts
  In its sordid embrace will enfold;
From its hard and cold visage will fly
  All the kindly affections that move
Man's heart from the mire of the sty
  To the finer delights of pure love.

We are born of the mutable Earth,
  And our souls suffer manifold change,
From the day of our corporal birth
  Till we enter Death's avenues strange;
And the thoughts that we think, and the deeds
  That we do, whether righteous or ill,
Each in its similitude breeds
  The fates moulding us as they will.

THE SOUL

THE soul is like a harp with many strings
  That echo every passing wind that blows—
The summer zephyr's idle murmurings,
  The fitful breeze that idly comes and goes.

Yet it responds more freely to some tones,
  To others yields a lesser sympathy,
Deep chords are wakened when the storm-wind moans
  And rouses passion or antipathy.

The soul is like a glass whose face reflects
  The varied phases of the forms around,
A mirror of the world without, whose specks
  And beauties in its faithful frame are found.

It smiles with Nature, and with Nature weeps,
  Bright sunshine mingles with our sombre fears,
Hope from dejection's weary prison leaps
  And with its radiance scatters idle fears.

We are but children playing at the portals,
  Yet looking not upon a palace fair,
Whose stately presence tells of the immortals,
  And many marvels that are hidden there.

EVENING

O'ER mountain, plain, and valley fall
  The shades of eventide,
Yet still the splendours of the day
  In memory abide;
And pleasant musings, idle dreams,
  Make calm the storm-tossed breast,
The lulling shades of evening bring
  With them benignant rest.

As cloudlets from a crystal sky
  Are born amidst the blue
And pass reluctant, one by one,
  Across the field of view,
So from the depths of memory rise
  The thoughts of other days,
And like a band of phantoms greet
  The mind's reflective gaze.

And softened by the twilight hours,
  Amid the gloaming seen,
The path of life looks fair and smooth,
  Unlike what it has been;
Each pleasant halt upon the way
  Looms large, and full, and clear,
And chastened by the lapse of time
  Our sorrows less appear.

But memory lingers with most charm
On some propitious hour
When sudden into bloom there sprang
Joy's most propitious flower;
A rapture all the senses thrilled,
A sudden glimpse of Heaven
Was opened for a moment, while
The world from us was riven.

Oh visions sweet, to man vouchsafed
Upon the road which he
Must travel to the distant land
Where dwells Eternity;
The light streams forth from his bright soul
Hid in its house of clay,
And gleaming for a moment shows
The bourne so far away.

Dear hallowed eve! when lovers meet
And deem the world their own,
The peace and beauty of the time
Seem gifts for them alone;
And friend converses with his friend,
Mind links itself to mind,
The fragrance of the evening wakes
Emotion soft and kind.

The shades fall thickly, and the green
Gay robe which decks the Earth
Throughout the day grows brown and dark,
And shadows strange have birth;
The planets shine in far-off realms,
And constellations bright,
The spirits of our fathers walk
The starry halls of night.

ALL'S WELL

Amid the fitful shades of sombre night
Dim ramparts rise before the troubled sight,
Their outlines vast reveal a denser gloom
Like harbingers of some impending doom;
When suddenly upon the ear there falls
The cry of wakeful sentry from the walls—
"All's well!"

Clear rings throughout the night the martial cry,
And breaks awhile the drear monotony
That hovers brooding o'er the slumbering town,
O'er hill and vale, green mead, and rolling down;
The mourner, prostrate with his grief and fears,
Feels hope upspringing swiftly when he hears
"All's well!"

Nor yet alone when nights are dark and drear,
But when a calm and mellow atmosphere
Grows lustrous with the moon and golden stars,
Nor bitter thought, nor painful memory mars
Our happiness, or dulls our higher aims,
The sentry with sonorous voice proclaims
"All's well!"

ALL'S WELL

All through the sluggish watches, till the dawn,
Rebounding echo unto echo borne
Denote the lapse of time, its ceaseless flight,
The changing splendours of the waning night;
For sentry unto sentry calls again,
And turn by turn they cry the clear refrain—
"All's well!"

So when deep gloom, begotten of our fears,
Obscures the hopes which cheer the toiling years,
And faith is lost amid despondency,
Life's summer changing to a wintry sky,
Then sudden from the heart's lone citadel
Is heard the calling of its sentinel—
"All's well!"

All's well, sad soul! though clouds conceal the sun,
All's well! though night is clothed with darkness dun,
All's well, sad soul! though seas and tempests rage,
And all the elements in war engage;
Though Nature reels and shakes each mountain crest,
All is not lost, but working for the best—
"All's well!"

THE TRUE LIFE

THE sum of our lives is complete
When our full tale of years has been told,
And we pass to the grave with slow feet
And a frame that is weary and old.

Yet our pulses may never have stirred
With the zeal of a vigorous life,
Nor our ears have been opened, or heard
The secrets in Nature so rife.

Have we bathed in the glories that spread
From the hands of the beautiful Sun
When his manifold splendours are shed
O'er the Earth that is grey-ribbed and dun?

Have we seen with the innermost eye
The beauty that robes every tree,
Every bird that aspires to the sky,
Every mountain, and plain, and the sea?

Have we felt the deep throbbing of love
Awakening the chords that are born
In the land where the fierce passions rove
And the flower from its refuge is torn?

THE TRUE LIFE

Have we shared the strong strife of strong men?
  Have we drunk of the wine that is made
In the stress of life's battle-storm when
  The strenuous lightnings have played?

For if, like the ox in the field,
  We have passed a dull time of content,
Our life, with its force unrevealed,
  Like a mist on the moor has been spent.

SOMETIMES, WHEN FLUSHED WITH PRIDE OF LIFE

Sometimes, when flushed with pride of life,
  Our pulses beating full and strong,
While through the glowing veins the blood
  In merry courses flows along,
By fond delusive fancy clad
  The world puts on its bridal dress,
And every feature of its face
  Is flushed with joy and happiness.

We hope and dream that we no more
  Down sorrow's rugged path may tread,
But that henceforth by fitful Fate
  We shall on pleasant ways be led,
That rosy dawns shall usher in,
  Day after day, a golden noon,
And when the sun has left the sky
  There shall appear a splendid moon.

But, then, alas! across our joy
  Misfortune's shadow oft is cast,
And from its cruel form proceed
  The breathings of an icy blast;

Our hearts and energies grow numb
With dread of that which may befall;
Along the gallery of our fears
Sad voices to each other call.

Perchance a being loved is brought
By sudden stroke to Death's dark gate,
Whose portals open to receive
The soul unto an unknown state;
Before the searching of its breath
The glamour from the great world rolls,
And Truth is seen in naked guise
When solemnly the requiem tolls.

Or it may be some cherished plan
On which our heart was wholly set
Has failed just when we hoped to grasp
The prize we toiled so long to get;
And if not these, yet we may meet
Some one of many painful checks
That mar the progress of our lives
And all our cherished fancies vex.

Yet grief and joy oft interchange
And life is made of many moods;
The melancholy strain that wakes
From Sorrow's fingering preludes
May yield to airs that waft the soul
On waves of music that do well
From hidden springs whose waters rise
Amid the fields of asphodel.

THE PARTING WAYS

While we, on worn and wayward feet,
  Pursue Life's strange and varied way,
Full many a fateful chance we meet
  That leads us from our road to stray.

Creatures of moods and passions we,
  Seldom by Reason's pharos led,
Unstable as the restless sea
  Rolling upon its rocky bed.

Mayhap some careless word has torn
  Us from the one we loved full well,
And henceforth must we sadly mourn
  The day when such a chance befell;

Or it may be that we have seen
  While toiling as if nigh defeat
Some pleasant byway clothed in green,
  An easy carpet for the feet.

Its verdant charm beguiled our gaze,
  We turned unto the tempting path;
But, lo! it led to mire and maze,
  Sin's recompense and aftermath.

THE PARTING WAYS

If but some splendid beacon flame
  Did on Life's distant summit burn,
We should behold a certain aim,
  The tenor of our way discern.

But we grope on, nor see beyond
  The margin of a narrow sphere;
Blindly we walk, and oft despond,
  Our minds bedimmed with doubt and fear.

LIFE

Our lives are but the echoes strange
  Which down the gallery of years
In changeful voices roll and range
  Expressive of our hopes and fears.

Our thoughts are born, we know not how,
  They flit like phantoms through the brain,
And make us to their wishes bow
  And o'er our every action reign.

From out the void, with whirring wings,
  Fate comes, and with her trumpet call
Bids some poor soul leave earthly things
  And enter in Death's gloomy hall.

SOME WORDS

It was not much that he did say,
Nor was it uttered readily,
But those few words she ne'er forgot,
Some words he whispered tenderly.

Through all the changes of her life
She cherished in her memory
The words she heard on that glad eve,
Those words he whispered tenderly.

Their fragrance lingered all her days,
They poured a balm on every smart,
The rhythm of the words was sweet,
She heard their chimings in her heart.

The tremor of their breathing woke
Rich chords of love's own melody,
And she repeated, oft and aye,
Those words he whispered tenderly.

THE DELHI DURBAR

December 12, 1911

A MONARCH great approaches now the East
Whose sceptre rules o'er many a region fair,
Like fragrance sweet by sultry breeze increased
His rumoured coming rustles through the air;
In gay bazaar, or at the marriage feast,
All India waits a day beyond compare;
Confused is heard the people's joyful din
From Himalayan snows to Comorin!

A land of romance and of fancies wild,
Where love is fervid as the tropic sun,
And the fierce warrior, like an humble child,
Obeys strange counsel from the dervish won.
In temples weird by blood-stained rites defiled
Dread gods look on where acts obscene are done,
While from the mosque, whose minaret cleaves the air,
The muezzin calls the faithful unto prayer.

From dawn of human speech has India made
The heart of man beat faster with desire,
Nations and tribes in battle host arrayed
Have scorched its fields like floods of living fire;
Transient have passed in glittering parade
Kings, armies, nations, to oblivion's pyre;
Seen through Time's mists that render history vain
There flames the cruel sword of Tamerlane.

Strong flows the turbid Ganges to the sea,
And when the moon illumes the sacred stream
Its waves receive the Hindu devotee;
To cleanse the soul their virtue is supreme,
Thus from all lusts and worldly pride set free
The soul grows meet for Heaven's immortal gleam;
How happy he who yielding his last breath
By Mother Ganges seeks the shades of death!

Lo, now the monarch sits on Akbar's throne
Amid a city haunted by the shades
Of kings and mighty rajahs wandering lone
Where once they rode in gorgeous cavalcades
While multitudes gave homage, lying prone,
And the wild Scythians shook their hungry blades;
Three thousand years have Delhi's towers loomed high,
The royal seat of many a dynasty.

The emperor is crowned; a golden crest,
Enriched with chasings fine and costly gems,
Rests on his brow; emblem of East and West
Together linked by India's diadem;
A hundred princes in rich garments dressed
His throne with signs of power thickly hem.
Through Asia rolls the splendour of this day,
From Caspian sea unto remote Cathay.

SONNETS

I

No country on this terrene globe is by
  The foot of man untrod, nor region where
  His voice has ne'er disturbed the silent air
With merry laugh or sad, despondent sigh,
Love's ardent tale or pain's unwitting cry;
  For many an age his prayers have been addressed
  To many a god, prayers holy, prayers unblest,
Plenteous as leaves the autumn winds drive by;
Oft has the mighty rack of battle rolled
  Thundering o'er land and sea, in many a clime,
  Brave men acclaiming death before their time,
Their valiant souls cast in heroic mould,
Man's spirit hovers round this mundane ball
And aye shall hold its destiny in thrall.

II

This globe is rich with memories new and old,
  The memories of past races who have played
  A part in life's strange drama, and essayed
To drink what nectar its deep cup may hold;
But mingled with these recollections old
  Are gathering memories of the nations who
  In multitudes innumerable do
From many lands the sun's red throne behold;

From out the mists of distant ages call
The voices of the creatures who have dwelt
Countless as sands upon the ocean's belt
Through untold years upon this earthly ball;
Yea, when the globe shall die and lifeless be
These memories shall enwrap it like a sea.

III

Fate gives to some men wealth; to others fame,
And some wear trappings of exalted power
That serve to cloak the heart where passions dour
Bedim the glory of the world's acclaim;
And some seek happiness in the demesne
Where pleasure's flowers are blooming every day,
Until the eye turns wearily away
From the impassioned, ever-restless flame;
And some move slowly as with feet of lead,
Who dully plod along the road of life,
Their only care to meet but little strife
And keep their eager bellies fully fed;
A few on wings of thought rise to the spheres
Where knowledge dwells and immemorial years.

IV

I built a palace in the land of dreams,
Where I might dwell awhile in pleasant ease
Ere I embarked upon the fateful craft
That bears us over death's tempestuous seas;
It wore the semblance of a joyous song
By art embodied into fretted stone,
Within my idols were in order ranged
Each seated on its own especial throne;

Its rooms were lit by fancy's vivid beams
  And all seemed ready for the promised rest,
A haven fair, a beauteous dwelling-place,
  Where every hour would give the next a zest.
But, lo! from off the world a blast did blow,
The palace tottered to its overthrow.

V

Lo! we have lost the sense of that repose
  Which rests upon the spirit like a cloud,
While the shrill clangour of the wild world grows
  Fainter and still more faint, until the crowd
Of anxious thoughts melt into pleasant dreams,
  When we do wander down full many a dale
Wherein the light of sweet contentment gleams
  And gay-winged fancy tells its fairy tale;
Our hearts pulsate too quickly, and the toil
  We bring upon us, the unceasing strife
And struggling in the eager world's turmoil,
  Debar us from enjoyment of the life
That spends its golden hours most peacefully
In flower-strewn meadows by a happy sea.

VI

The tranquil insect sucks up greedily
  The nectar welling from the rose's breast;
  A proud concave around, in azure dressed,
Extends an ample dome most gloriously;
Slim columns, crowned with gold, rise gracefully
  From out the verdure, and a rich perfume
  Like some sweet presence in a noble room
Floats like an idle dream, voluptuously;

Here roam through many a deep-hued corridor
Creatures minute, and crawl their lives away.
Perchance a sunny gleam from out the day
May hint to these dull souls there may be more
Than to their untaught eyes doth now appear,
Some novel scene, some unimagined sphere.

VII

The silver moth flits by on lustrous wing,
Around the lamp its rapid pinions play,
Near and more near it seeks the dazzling thing
To probe the novel splendour if it may;
The hot effulgence fills its petty brain
With dreams of manifold delights in store:
What treasures may that golden light contain?
What wondrous bliss to moth unknown before?
Full soon the glowing flame intoxicates,
The danger grows with every giddy whirl,
Till comes a moment when the fiery fates
Seize on the insect in its dying swirl.
Thus man, pursuing oft a glittering crown,
Finds but a grave wherein to lay him down.

VIII

Hope's voice seductive stirs the human heart
From hours of childhood with its light desires,
Till youth is kindled with love's ardent fires
And golden scenes of happiness upstart;
Then comes ambition with its pungent dart,
Pursuit of riches, and the race for wealth,
Where he who wins yet injures his soul's health.
"Success," Hope whispers to each fainting heart,

"Strive on, for certain is the morrow's gain.
Oft gloomy clouds obscure the flaming sun,
Its glory hidden by a curtain dun;
The clouds will pass, the sun be seen again."
And when, oppressed by years, ambition dies,
Hope promises a mansion in the skies.

IX

O river, thou art not the same to-day
As yestere'en; nor shall the waters flow
To-morrow which to-day the breezes blow
Into light waves that rise, then glide away;
The life that dwells within thee changes not,
But ever drift thy waters without cease;
The trees that shade thee stand and there increase,
Upon thy banks the flowers fulfil their lot;
The fishes haunt thy pools and breed their young,
Thou giv'st them sustenance, with all the fowl
And insects that about thy surface prowl,
Nor heed what waters they may sport among.
O river, whom the pleasant zephyrs woo,
Like Time, thou art a shade and presence too.

X

The last brown, withered leaf falls to the ground,
And naked stands the stiff and sapless tree,
A torpor grasps its soul, and creepingly
The chill of Winter through its frame is wound.
Gone is its verdure with the cheerful sound
Of bird and insect gay that make their home
Amid the tender combings of the foam
Of its soft foliage; and its life is bound

Fast in the cincture of the wrinkled bark.
Yet once again, when the young Spring shall call,
Its prison opened by the sun's hot ball,
The tree shall to the welcome summons hark;
Then every twig a gracious leaf shall bear,
A glorious robe of green the tree shall wear.

XI

Lo! when the limner Spring, with glowing hand,
Begins to paint the earth with colours fair,
While sunbeams warm the brisk and cheerful air,
And warbling birds are heard throughout the land,
Then o'er the wattle's leaflets dark and tanned
There spreads a saffron blush; faintly at first
Till, gathering splendour, the whole tree doth burst
Into a golden vision, rich and grand,
Sumptuous the robe of beauty, but its hues
Are fleeting as the tints of evening clouds
That snatch a glory from the dying sun,
A moment they majestic lights diffuse,
Then with its cloak the night their forms enshrouds
And spectres whisper in the darkness dun.

XII

Man's soul has aye been vexed with many creeds,
The offspring of his strong desire to know
Why he to life did come, to death must go,
And why he fain must strive with sordid needs.
A multitude of gods he has, and feeds
The hungry flame on promises and hopes
That one day he shall mount celestial slopes
And reach the path empyreal that leads

To realms where human faculties unfold
And all their secret powers and might display
As streaks of morn expand to perfect day;
Thus shall he gain a prize of bliss untold.
But are these truths, or only dreams that pass
Like shadows flitting o'er the silly grass?

PART II

THE FISHING OF MAUI *

I

GREAT Maui, born of men,
But kindred to the Powers
Who dwell in realms of bliss
Unmindful of the hours,
Alone within a glen
That clove the mountain's side
Where down the steepness rushed
A turbid, icy tide,
Wandered like one whose thoughts
Confined to their own sphere
Heed not what lies beyond
Its narrow atmosphere.
The Southern Cross's gems
Shone nigh the Austral Pole,
Where stars unnumbered gleam,
A bright, celestial shoal.
And as he roamed there stirred
Within the human clod
A spirit from on high
The spirit of the god:

* According to Maori legend, the North Island of New Zealand was fished up from the sea by Maui, a kind of demigod, who used upon the occasion a hook made from the jawbone of his grandfather, as one version of the legend gives it, while another makes his grandmother the original owner of the jawbone. Maui is pronounced *Mawee*.

A tumult strange and strong
  Arose within his breast,
Yearnings divine and deep,
  Longings unexpressed.
The throes that herald birth
  Of mighty enterprise
Disturbed his soul and made
  The fire leap in his eyes;
And then, in that ravine,
  He built an altar vast
Of rocks in ancient times
  From some volcano cast.

With many a murmured spell
  Upon its top he laid
The brands from which a fire
  Could readily be made;
Strange brands were they, nor shaped
  By mortal hand or skill,
Enchanted withers bound
  Ghostly material;
They gave a novel flame
  When Maui lit the pyre,
Its colour like the moon,
  A cold and pallid fire;
The fern trees that grew sparse
  About the silent glen
Cast shadows dense that roved
  Like wraiths of guilty men.
With incantations rare
  From wise tohungas learnt
He cast upon the fire—
  And yet it was not burnt—
The jawbone that he rapt

From his ancestor's face,
His grandsire, wisest seer
Of all the Maori race.
About the giant bone
The pale flames flashed and played,
Whose lambent tongues licked clean
The ivory and made
A charm of wondrous force
Imbued with art sublime,
Fell power to shake the Earth
And probe the depths of Time.
Thus Maui sought to wed
The living with the dead.

II

The fishermen toiled from the break of the day till the sun
Lay close to the rim of the ocean, and the petrels began to decline
And fold up their wings on the waters, their day's flying done,
While the hues of the sea grew deeper, with the tints of rich, ruddy wine,

The scaly-clad fish slid past, despising the glittering bait,
And the fishermen's souls waxed sad, as the hours loitered wearily by,
The canoe, to the rhyme of the waves, rocked slow with a staggering gait,
While low in the south the Kaikouras * loomed white on an amethyst sky.

* A range of mountains in the South Island.

Then mighty, inscrutable Maui, from slumber profound,
Uprose with the mien of the prophet, and his eye pale with mystery,
And from the canoe's narrow bearings he swiftly unwound
Long coil after coil of white muka, flax cultured by hands weird and dree.

He plaited and fashioned a cable, Titanic in strength,
And chanted a chant full of power, full of dread, in a voice like the wind,
While the line that he wove unravelled its wonderful length,
Till it seemed as if Maui were seeking the Earth in strong cordage to bind;

And the song that he sang, the magical words that he said,
Shook the terrified sun, whose rays became thrilled with a tremulous motion,
While from the gathering clouds the moon showed its old, pallid head,
And the pulse of the ocean throbbed with a wild and fierce commotion.

Then to the line deftly he fastened, with many a fold,
The hook he had fashioned with craft and with guile from his ancestor's bone,
And, raising his voice till across the Pacific it rolled,
Filling full the concave of Heaven with a rich and sonorous tone,

With huge sturdy arm he flung far, far from the vessel's low side,
The line with its bait, which adown the blue waters quivered and sank
To realms of liquescent darkness, where unshapely creatures abide
And roam through the forests of ocean, whose colourless herbage grows rank;

Till the bone, like an anchor, clung fast to the place where it fell,
And Maui, with deep suspirations, drew tauter and tauter the line,
And the sea in huge surges and manifold waves 'gan to swell,
While on Nature's brow, like an omen dread, there gleamed a terrible sign.

And the sharks, mad with fear, the krakens, leviathan whales,
Raised a tempest of foam on the ocean with their churnings and fright;
The sky muttered thunder, the breath of the freshening gales
Blew keenly and strong and shook out the robes of the fast-coming night;

Till a mountain arose from the waves of the boundless deep,
And the valleys debouched to the plain, and the plain spread down to the shore,
And a land fair and stately lay there in a garment of sleep
As if it had slumbered in rest profound since the days of evermore.

TE REINGA

NEAR the headland bold and steep
Where Te Reinga's ramparts creep
Into the wave,
Where the surges and the foam
Guard the dead's most secret home
From gaze profane,
And the sea birds' raucous cry
Warns the spectres coming nigh,
But warns in vain;

Region where the phantoms mourn,
To the sunless caves forlorn
On their way,
Region where the souls of men
Shudder through the haunted glen
Night and day,
Region of the borderland,
Life with Death there locked in hand,
Twin brothers they,—

Lived in olden times a man
Clothed with years beyond the span
Of mortal race;
Wise in occult arts and dread,
Oft conversing with the dead
Dwelling alone;

Priest and chieftain in his day,
All his kin had passed away
Unto their place.

Oft when on his hermit bed,
Resting there with hoary head
Through night's long hours,
Lay the wizard, lo! his sense
Quickened to a point intense
By thought and woe,
Heard the spirits' voices thin
Stirring with their ghostly din
The passing hours.

Now and then a voice more loud
Back returning with its shroud
To life's sweet land,
Wairatane's slender stream
Frightened with its spectral gleam
The timid soul,—
Back it came to joyous Earth,
Life, and love, and jocund mirth,
The mortal band.

Sometimes when the sun's warm light
Clothed the world with colours bright,
A garment gay,
Came a sound unto the seer,
Creeping to his trembling ear,
Wailing and slow—
Sobs that told the progress fell,
Progress of a soul to hell,
Passing away.

TE REINGA

When the battle fiercely rolled,
Foeman meeting foeman bold,
Spear raised to spear,
Fast the phantoms flitted by,
Flitting with a bitter cry,
Hate after death,
All the frenzy of the fight
Bearing to Te Reinga's height
And caverns drear.

Fast now the old tohunga sleeps,
O'er his lone grave the lizard creeps,
His life, and deeds, and wondrous mind
Forgotten like the passing wind.
But still along Te Reinga tread
Reluctant phantoms of the dead;
Trembling they seek what fate shall be
Theirs when they sink into the sea,
The depths of the measureless sea.

(*Note.*—According to the old Maori belief, the soul, immediately after death, makes its way to the extreme north of New Zealand, to a place called Te Reinga, and there descends into its future abode beneath the earth by passing along a rocky promontory and plunging into the sea, where it enters the caves of the dead, which are supposed to be hidden from view by masses of seaweed floating upon the surface of the ocean. Before it can reach the promontory, the soul must cross a small stream called Wairatane, and up to this time it has the option of returning to the world, which refers to the case of persons who have been brought to the verge of death, and then recovered. Wairatane once crossed, the soul can no longer return.)

INA'S VOYAGE TO THE SACRED ISLE

Upon the strangest bark that e'er
  Since man was born sailed on the sea
A voyager of noble air
  Was carried o'er it buoyantly,
    A maid whose rank and lineage long
    Are celebrate in Maori song.

Safe on the shark king's ample back
  Sat Ina, exile from her home,
Behind them oped a hollow track
  Where surged the white, tumultuous foam—
    Tekea's wondrous magnitude
    Made minnows of the fishy brood.

Proud Ina, to the gods allied,
  Brooked not her parents' bitter wrath;
Urged by the prickings of her pride
  She sought upon the sea a path
    By which the sacred isle to gain
    Where noble Tinirau doth reign.

A girdle clasped her supple waist,
  A cincture blessed with magic power,
With many a weird device 'twas graced,
  A talisman in direst hour;
    The spirits of the dead amid
    The compass of its folds lay hid.

On sea or land this girdle kept
The wearer safe from every ill;
Though ocean were by tempest swept
Till every wave became a hill,
Vainly the hurricane would roar
If Ina but the girdle wore.

The sacred isle was far away,
A distant guerdon to be won,
She knew not where save that it lay
Amongst the regions of the sun;
Tekea saw, within his brain,
The route to take across the main.

Upon his tropic island home
Dwells Tinirau, of fishes lord,
Of fish that in the ocean roam,
Or life to flowing streams afford;
Tekea, subject to his spell,
The way unto the isle could tell.

"O king of sharks! what craft are these
Fast toiling in your mighty wake?
They seem to stretch across the seas,
About them little surges break.
Are they perchance a hostile band
Pursuing from my parents' land?"

Thus Ina spake; her woman's fears
O'ercoming her a moment till
Athwart her bosom's gathering tears
She felt the girdle's welcome thrill;
The force that issued from its flame
Gave courage to her trembling frame.

"No craft are they hewn from the tree,
Fashioned with cunning skill and art,
But sharks that swim the boundless sea,
Oft wandering lonely, far apart,
Now in a line their grim shapes glide
Like to a pennon floating wide.

"Fear not their fierce and cruel jaws,
For none shall harm thee; but when they
Can hear thy voice bid them give pause
And this command of mine obey:
'The king of sharks needs not your train
Return unto your haunts again.'"

Tekea thus the maiden cheered,
And so it happed, for when the shark
That led the host came nigh and veered
Unto the side of Ina's bark,
She spake the words Tekea bade
Unto the finny cavalcade.

Nor spoke in vain; for scarce had died
The silver tones upon the air
Than fins and backs of sharks were spied
Rippling the ocean everywhere;
Soon disappeared the ravening brood,
Slumbered the sea in solitude.

Days followed nights, nights followed days,
Tekea still was journeying;
Now seas encountered Ina's gaze,
Strange birds flew by on novel wing,
The sun and moon remained the same,
But every night fresh planets came.

Her dreamy soul was wrapped in trance;
And as successive marvels rose
From out the concave's vast expanse,
Deep longings stirred with many throes—
For knowledge quickens with desire
As on broad pinions it mounts higher.

The fervour of romantic quest
Kindled her fancy into flame,
And by the light within her breast
The ocean, air, and sky became
A vision floated from afar
From out of some celestial star.

Till one bright morn, as some faint dream
Our fancy oft has strove to woo
Becomes a real and living theme,
The holy island rose to view,
And Ina saw, with heart elate,
The isle that held her future fate.

Its peaks assailed a tender mist
That hung o'er many a chasm dim
Where birds whose plumes the sun had kissed
Sang oft the forest's ancient hymn,
A sacred glamour clothed the land
From mountain top to coral strand.

. . . . . .

Before her lies a shining lake
Upon whose marge tall palm trees grow,
Gay fish of brilliant colours shake
The waters, flashing to and fro;
Of various size, their splendours seem
The fancies of a gorgeous dream.

INA'S VOYAGE TO THE SACRED ISLE

Far off a lofty mountain rears
  Tremendous steeps against the sky,
And in one deep ravine appears
  A cascade falling noiselessly;
    It flashes with a splendid zest,
    A jewel on the mountain's breast.

Beside the lake a dwelling throws
  A shadow of a giant size
Upon the water's calm repose,
  And greets the maiden's wondering eyes;
    Its portals, carved with skill and grace,
    Bear records of the owner's race.

With timid steps she enters in
  And views the pillars of the hall,
Deep solitude prevails within,
  She fears lest harm may her befall;
    No voice or sound the ear doth meet,
    It seems sad Silence's retreat.

Behold, a drum of strange design,
  Weird figures carved upon each rim,
Hangs from the roof by flaxen line
  Where daylight hovers dull and dim;
    Beneath lie prone two batons good
    Made of the fragrant sandalwood.

An ardent wish stirs Ina's breast
  To hear the drum's sonorous voice,
A wish that will not be suppressed,
  Waxing until it leaves no choice;
    Then Ina lets a baton fall
    Upon the drum in that great hall.

Deep, strong, and musical the sound
That issues from th' enchanted drum,
It fills the palace; all around
Reverberates the pleasant hum;
Throughout the island floats the strain,
It hovers o'er the neighbouring main.

Tinirau hears; and well he knows
The meaning of the mellow tune
That stirs him where he seeks repose
On this languorous afternoon,
For he by occult art and guile
Had brought the maid unto the isle.

Now goes the demigod to greet
The bird that he by craft had snared;
Noble his port like one whose seat
Is distant from the common herd;
The tattoo that adorns his face
Betokens one of highest race.

Ina perceives him coming o'er
The grass that bends beneath his tread,
But ere he enters in the door
Behind a screen the maid has fled;
His mien expresses majesty
And warlike is his piercing eye.

The drum with Ina's passionate stroke
Through all its fabric vibrates still,
For like a living thing it woke
When that proud hand made its heart thrill;
Long tremors through its fibres creep
Ere it again sinks into sleep.

But vainly looks the demigod
For her who made the drum vibrate;
Brief is the search, careless his nod,
For well he weens that soon or late
She must be his; nor can she fly
Nor 'scape for long her destiny.

Then Tinirau, with measured pace,
Walks from the mansion by the lake,
And Ina sees, with burning face,
His form retreating through the brake.
Fond love illumes her dark-brown eyes,
Her heart throbs quickly lest the prize

Should now escape her, for she ne'er
Such stately presence saw before,
And fain the name of wife would bear
To Tinirau, nor leave him more;
Swiftly the waves of passion come,
Again she strikes the magic drum.

The grateful tones assail the ear
Of him for whom those tones were meant,
Upon his countenance appear
The lights of amorous sentiment;
Nor slow his steps as back he hies,
Longing to bask in Ina's eyes.

O love reciprocal, what bliss
With thy sweet ecstasy can vie!
To man no greater boon than this
Has fallen from the upper sky;
Attracted both by Love's warm flame,
Ina Tinirau's wife became.

THE MAID OF THE MIST

Draped in mist-like fancy's dreams
When they drift obscurely by,
From her lofty home and proud
Coming gently from the sky
Tairi reached the Earth.

Sought a moss-besprinkled glade
In primæval forest dim,
Where the kauri rears its trunk
Loftily without a limb,
Then puts on its crown.

Gaily brawled a pebbly brook
'Neath the leafy, green arcade,
Till it reached a fern-clad rock
Where a crystal pool it made,
Bathing-place for gods.

Tairi loved this blest retreat,
There to muse in idleness,
Watch the lakelet's tranquil face
Smiling at her loveliness,
Hear the tui's call.

THE MAID OF THE MIST

Oft when evening's shadows crept
Slowly over mount and fell,
Tairi's footstep broke the peace
Nestling in this pretty dell
Like a quiet bird.

Perfect was her form and tall,
Dark as night her lustrous hair
Rippling to her nimble feet,
Such the garment she did wear
Clothing her about.

Once it happed that, as she bathed,
Sporting in the forest pool,
Giving life and grace unto
Its translucent waters cool
Till they laughed with joy,

Came Uenuku, youthful chief,
Idly rambling through the wood,
Looking where a snare could be
Laid to catch the pigeon brood
Drowsing in the trees;

Snatched a passing glimpse of her
Beauty looming through the shade,
Never had his eyes beheld
Such a gladsome, gracious maid,
Flushed with love and joy.

Then he waited, lying prone,
On luxurious moss he lay,
Till, emerging from the pool
Radiant as a summer day,
Tairi leaped to land.

Sudden as the lightning's spear
Flashes from the sombre cloud
Rushed Uenuku from his lair,
Seized the maiden crying loud,
Loud her cries of fear.

But the chieftain with kind words
Calmed the startled maiden's fear,
Many honied flatteries
Offered to her willing ear,
Much her beauty praised;

Asked her to become his wife,
Dweller on the dædal earth,
Leaving the celestial domes,
Place of her illustrious birth,
For his love and home.

Swift the wooing in old days
When the Maori sought to wed,
Nor delayed he to invite
Love unto the bridal bed,
Rapid was the flame.

Tairi, by such ardour won,
To his plea gave kind assent,
But to Uenuku's warm desire
Ere unto his home she went
Warning words addressed:

"Alway through the hours of night
I shall be your willing bride;
While the stars pursue their course
I will linger by your side,
Life and love of thine.

"But when streaks of amber light
Hint the coming of the dawn,
Quitting your fond couch I fly
Ere the breaking of the morn
To my distant home.

"This shall be our troth and pledge—
Till our son is lusty grown
Shall my form and features be
To the idle world unknown,
Nor my name revealed.

"If by love or pride impelled
You shall break this marriage vow,
Snapt for aye shall be the bond
That unites our spirits now,
Lonely I depart."

"Love of mine," Uenuku said,
"Let the marriage pledge fast bind
Heart and soul of both until
You its mysteries unwind,
Such my plighted troth."

Thus were they in secret wed
Unknown to Uenuku's clan,
And a son to them was born—
Promise of a noble man
Was the beauteous boy.

Much the people of the tribe
Marvelled what her name might be
Who had borne Uenuku's son
In a place of mystery,
What her rank and tribe.

Long Uenuku kept his troth,
Nor revealed the mother's name,
Till the people's strong desire
Burst into a raging flame,
Then his heart grew sad.

"People mine, no longer hid
Mother of my child shall be,
All her beauty and her grace
Your enraptured eyes shall see
At to-morrow's dawn.

"Yet I know that, yielding thus,
I shall rue a bitter fate,
Leading me on rugged paths
Over ways disconsolate,
Sad my future days."

Then with rush and flax he closed
Every chink through which the light
Entered when the morning beams
Scared away the foolish night;
Darkened all the house.

Thus the morn had blossomed when
Tairi rising from her bed
Oped the door to look around
Ere unto the sky she sped,
Saw the wond'ring crowd.

Lo! her gentle eyes became
Glowing wells of angry fire,
All her presence larger grew
With the fullness of her ire
At Uenuku's cheat.

To the cowering man she spoke
Bitter words of bitter scorn,
Words that left a trail that stung,
Every word a piercing thorn
Wounding his sad heart:

"Baseborn traitor, dog unclean,
Breaker of a solemn troth,
Wife no more of thine am I,
Now I leave thee, nothing loth,
Fleeing from my shame."

Then her form, robed round with mist,
Rose unto the upper air,
Mingled like a summer cloud
With the unseen atmosphere,
Vanishing from view.

Long Uenuku searched and sought,
Vainly wandering, near and far,
Oft through dangerous regions passed
Where the cave-born monsters are,
Seeking his lost wife;

Prayed the wise tohunga old
For a charm of magic power
By whose aid he might discern
Where loved Tairi kept her bower,
In what clime she dwelt.

Thus he made a weary quest,
Never ending till his life
Passed unto Te Reinga's shades
From the world's perpetual strife,
Glad he went to rest.

Yet 'tis said his spirit chafes
Restless in its dim abode,
Sometimes e'en it strives to mount
Skyward on the splendid road
By the rainbow made.

Looms his form upon the arch
Which the sky to dull Earth links
For a moment, then it fades
As the air its colours drinks,
Quaffing them away.

THE LOVES OF TAKARANGI AND RAU-MAHORA *

In every land beneath the sun
The fire of love perpetual burns,
Its flame may sink awhile, but soon
The glow unto the hearth returns;
It heeds not rank, nor race, nor creed,
Nor palace, nor the humble cot,
Alike it burns in lands renowned
And where the savage has his lot.

Where Taranaki's fern-clad hills
Look on the smiling, sunlit sea,
In days when, clothed in flaxen garb,
The Maori dwelt in savagery,
There lived a chieftain of great fame,
War-worn and grim with many years—
Rangirarunga was a name
That shook the trembling land with fears.

In his old age there came a flood
Of foes from all the country round,
That drove the chieftain and his tribe
Within a fortress' narrow bound;

* This legend is said to be a true story.

There men heroically died
With faces set against the foe,
Till hunger made its presence felt,
A spectre stalking to and fro.

But most were they oppressed with thirst,
The direst of the ills that rend
And rack man's mortal frame, and make
The spirit to the body bend;
For none, though brave, for many days
The lack of water can endure;
Delirium seizes on the brain,
And death, though lingering, is most sure.

Upon the earthen wall that made
The pa a fort of strength indeed
The chieftain stood, with lofty mien,
And pride that struggled hard with need.
His frame was gaunt; his face, which bore
The tattoo of a lineage high,
Was thin and pinched with famine's grasp,
And sunken was his bloodshot eye.

"O gallant foes," the chieftain cried,
As he leant on a mighty spear,
"Fierce battle have we waged, and blood
Has washed the country far and near;
And yet again the trump shall sound
To call us to the deadly fray,
Like foemen shall we meet, and bear
Us bravely through the martial day.

"But now sad wives and children faint,
By want of water sore oppressed,
The fire of fever burns their veins,
And anguish dwells in every breast;
Give us a little water, pray,
A moment to relieve our pain,
Then let the spear again be hurled,
The din of battle roll again."

From out the foemen's ranks one came
Who bore, with careful step and slow,
A calabash of water clear,
A noble gift from foe to foe;
And from the pa's intricate gate,
Secured by scarp and palisade,
The chief approached the enemy,
And by his side was his dear maid.

She was the glory of her tribe,
Her beauty famous near and far:
Her eyes were black, but sparkled like
The gleaming of a splendid star;
Her form was fashioned in the mould
That Nature used ere art was known,
The grace that mingled with her mien
Belonged unto herself alone.

But from the Ngatiawa rose
Tumultuous cries of discontent,
And angry words expressing wrath
With looks of bitter hate were blent;

Then some rushed forth, and from the man
  On mercy's kindly errand bound
They wrenched the calabash and poured
  The precious water on the ground.

The suffering chief beheld the crime,
  Nor could his breast repress a groan ;
The maiden wept, and from her lips
  There came a feeble husky moan.
Yet while the anguish was supreme,
  And hope seemed to have fled the fort,
The chief discerned, amidst his foes,
  A warrior youth, of noble port.

From his broad shoulders proudly hung
  A flaxen mat, of choicest kind,
His hand a carven taiaha grasped,
  And softly, waving in the wind,
A splendid plume adorned his hair,
  Of heron white, by chieftains worn,
For Takarangi was a youth
  Of lofty rank, whom none could scorn.

O bird of beauty ! bird so rare !
  O heron of the snowy plume !
Thy race is few, and soon the last
  Shall seek the silence of the tomb ;
The world will then have lost for aye
  A dream of loveliness and grace,
And man will be the poorer when
  Thou hast departed to thy place.

Hope crept once more into the heart
Of the old chieftain when he saw
Brave Takarangi, and perceived
The youth was one whose word was law;
And mastering the pride which still
Held sway within his aged breast,
He rallied his diminished strength,
And thus the martial youth addressed:

"O youth, who wear'st the heron's plume
And emblems of a chieftain's power,
Canst thou, by thy commands alone,
Control thy people in this hour?
For if thou canst, bid them be still,
And of thy grace, in our sore need,
Give us to drink, and thou shalt have
A warrior's thanks for noble deed."

Perchance the aged man had sought
The boon in vain, but that the maid,
His daughter Rau-Mahora, stood
Just by, and with her glances bade
The youth respond to mercy's call
And with a generous bounty give
The water that was asked, and thus
Let her and her old father live.

For, lo! the fire of sudden love
Was lit in Takarangi's breast,
Enraptured with the subtle flame
He thus the aged man addressed:

" Rangira, I was born to rule,
A race of chieftains were my sires,
My people are my humble slaves,
None dare object to my desires."

Then with the warrior's trumpet voice
The youth bade all the turmoil cease;
The storm was stayed, none dared rebel,
And for a season there was peace.
He bade a slave himself attend
And carry water to the chief,
The warrior old and maiden drank
The water brought for their relief.

Oh happy gift! Oh splendid boon!
To giver and receiver blessed,
For in that hour the youth and maid
Each to the other love confessed.
And soon they wed, with pomp and state,
And thus the toils of war did cease;
Their nuptials made between the tribes
A treaty of perpetual peace.

TAMA AND RUKUTIA

As long as this bright planet rolls
Bearing its freight of human souls
Shall fierce and fitful passions burn
Within the heart's immortal urn,
And men and women love and hate,
The playthings of relentless fate ;
Or where the Polar Star shines clear
And looks upon the Northern Bear,
Or where the Southern Cross hangs high
Resplendent in the Austral sky,
Alike shall men, by women led,
The paths of toil and danger tread,
And women, bound with cords of love,
Shall to men's bidding blindly move.
This is a tale of Maori lore
Of things that happed in days of yore
Ere yet the white man's eye had seen
New Zealand's hills and forests green.

. . . . . .

Tama, the chief, a stalwart man,
Whose bulk a foe would keenly scan
And mark the breadth of his huge chest,
The sinews in close knots compressed,
But clumsy were his movements, while
No graces had he to beguile

The eye of woman, or to move
Her fancy on the path of love,
And Rukutia, who had borne
Him children twain, yet felt some scorn
Of Tama, for his rugged face
And body destitute of grace;
Though wife she was, and brooked his will,
She never felt affection's thrill,
Nor sought to make his troubles less,
Or to promote his happiness.

The village rang with merry din,
For Tutekoro was within,
A visitor who came in state,
With pomp belonging to the great;
His garb was rich, demeanour proud,
Glancing disdain upon the crowd,
His face and mien alike designed
To please and flatter womankind,
And, much relying on his powers,
He sought to while away the hours
By many a compliment and jest
To Rukutia's self addressed.
Thus was her heart by flattery won
Before the day's swift course was done.

A storm of rage from Tama burst
When he with much amazement first
Learned of his faithless spouse's flight
With Tutekoro in the night.
But soon the fervid passions' play
Unto a sterner mood gave way,

And anxiously his eager brain
Debated how he might regain
Possession of the errant wife
To him still dearer than his life;
For well he loved the dame, and grieved
That he should be by her deceived.
But dangerous was the quest, and such
As might a valiant warrior touch
With terror lest his arms and skill
Should meet a foe they could not kill;
For Tutekoro was adept
In magic craft, and his mind kept
Strange knowledge, while he words could say
That e'en the elements obey.

When from death's solemn slumber wakes
The soul, and all Earth's shackles breaks,
It seeks the Reinga's amplitude,
The portal of infinitude,
Imprisoned 'tween majestic hills,
Down whose rude sides flow many rills,
A lake displays its spacious breadth
Whose waters, never stirred by breath
Of cheerful air, lie motionless,
As if confined in hard duress.
Here roams the soul and suffers change
New fashioned by surroundings strange,
Until the mundane form is made
A body mingled with a shade;
And haply visitors from Earth
Proud claimants to distinguished birth,
May come to seek their ancient kin
For counsel sage and guidance in

Some dire extremity which they
Are faced with in the upper day.

It chanced that wandered spirits three
Upon the lake's shore pensively,
Two parents and a daughter fair
Who kinsfolk unto Tama were,
When, lo! across the water flew
A large white heron, and it grew
More splendid as it nearer came,
A living flash of silver flame.
The father said, "My daughter, make
A forceful charm whereby to break
The meaning of this wondrous sight,
A heron from the world of light;
Mayhap some kinsman in this guise
The Reinga seeks, to grow more wise."
Nor was Kohuwai loth, for she
Was filled with curiosity,
So fashioning a charm she threw
It at the heron as it flew.
The bird was by the charm oppressed,
Such potency the charm possessed,
And fluttering down, upon the shore
A moment paused; but then no more
A bird appeared, and in its place
Stood Tama, destitute of grace.
"O Tama," cried the spirits three,
Their voices sounding hollowly,
"Why com'st thou to this region dim
Upon the verge and outer rim
Of Reinga, where the light of sun
Or moon prevails not, nor can one

Behold the stars that stud the sky,
Proud watchers o'er man's destiny,
But ever broods a twilight grey,
Changeless, and seeming dull alway?"
"O kinsfolk mine, know that I come
By free will to this region dun,
To seek if haply there may be
Some charm or royal pharmacy
Whose virtue may on me descend,
And beauty to my body lend."
Thus Tama spake, and marvelled much
The spirits, learning that for such
A cause he sought the Reinga dread
And bloodless phantoms of the dead.
"Still must thou journey on," said they,
"Still farther leave the upper day,
Until thy watchful eyes approve
The shadows of a karaka grove;
There Hoko dwells and Ha, whom fate
Once ranked amongst the mundane great.
Their blood now gives thee life and force,
While they pursue a weary course
In Reinga—who can tell its end,
Or whither there the soul shall wend?
But Ha and Hoko have the skill
To make thee handsome, if they will."
Then Tama felt much joy that he
Might yet a handsome warrior be.
Upon the wan lake's rocky shore
He walked awhile, until before
His eyes there suddenly appeared
A grove of karaka trees upreared,
And waiting there, as if they knew
His coming, were those kinsmen two.

Then Tama to the ghosts confessed
The hope whereby his soul was blessed;
Nor they disdained what he besought,
But with a wondrous cunning wrought
On face and body many a line
That wound in curve and spiral fine.
Each handsome feature was revealed
And ruggedness of face concealed,
Till Tama stood, with bosom glad,
In every manly beauty clad;
Sharp pains had racked him through and through
As he endured the sharp tattoo,
But these were rapidly forgot
Now he had gained a happier lot.

Once more he breathed the world's fresh air,
Once more stood in the sunshine's glare,
Again beheld the Ocean vast,
The Present, Future, and the Past.
All these he saw with heart elate,
Rejoicing at his better state;
And from the Reinga's ghostly bower
The rotu's fragrant, mystic flower
Whose scent, inhaled, doth always move
The bosom to kind thoughts of love,
He bore to Earth; a gift benign
Plucked from the Reinga's inner shrine.

The fire of hope now warmed his breast
And filled it with impetuous zest
To seek the place where he might find
His wife, perchance of other mind
Than when from virtue's path she strayed
And Tama's loving heart betrayed.

But ere the journey was begun,
Just at the rising of the sun,
His soul, in fervid words, did pray
Unto the Powers exerting sway
O'er mountains, forests, rivers, all
That could while travelling him befall,
To render vain the arts whereby
That Tutekoro might yet try
To lay across his path a spell
And lead him whither none could tell.
Nor were the Powers offended by
Such pious pertinacity,
But gave him conduct, safe and sure,
And strength all hardships to endure.

It was an autumn eve, and all
The leaves were trembling at the call
Of winter, when a stranger came,
With tattered garb and unwashed frame,
Unto the village in a glade,
Protected by rude palisade,
Where Tutekoro's clan renowned
Dwelt heedless of the foeman round.
The folk, deceived by his poor dress
And mien of studied humbleness,
Deemed him some common churl, whose task
Would be what every one might ask,
But when his feeble steps they saw
They laughter and the gibe forbore.
And as the mellow evening light
Gave place unto the shades of night
The villagers assembled in
The large hall, where a merry din

Betokened that some festal cheer
Awaited those expectant there.
Then Tama squatted down beside
A carven post, which would him hide
From the bright light the wood fire made
As round the logs the red flames played;
His heart beat quick when he did hear
The people shout "O Rukutia,
Come forth and let your dancing move
Us to delightful dreams of love!"
Then Rukutia, decked and proud,
Appeared before the eager crowd;
With posturings of subtle grace
And rapid gestures of the face
She 'gan the dance she danced so well;
But Tama cast a sudden spell
Upon her, and her eyes o'erflowed
With water as if some great flood
Of tears had gushed from a full spring
Where grief lay sadly weltering.
Then stopped the dance awhile till she
Could regain equanimity,
Till, keeping back the tears, she strove
By every lively step to move
The company to plaudits loud,
And gain the suffrage of the crowd.
'Natheless the tears would come, and still
She fought against this wondrous ill;
At length reluctant left the stage;
Her face distorted with fell rage.

It was the midnight hour, and high
The moon hung in the silent sky,

The owl gave forth a raucous note
Proceeding from its inmost throat;
Then fearless Tama, who much dared,
To Rukutia's house repaired.
No longer sordid was his face,
The tattoo showed its mazy grace,
His dress, by skilful art disposed,
The beauty of his form disclosed,
And, sitting by the outer door,
He pressed the rotu, which he bore
From Reinga, till its grateful scent
Throughout the spacious dwelling went.
A charm he uttered; then uprose
From where she vainly sought repose
His wife, and saw his handsome guise,
And strong desire leaped in her eyes;
Nor feared she that his love was dead
And vengeance filled his soul instead,
For well she knew that, in sweet strife,
Love for her mingled with his life.
"O Tama, husband mine," said she,
"Let us from hence together flee;
Oft have I grieved that I thee left,
Our children of my care bereft.
Much pain and wrong have I endured,
My love for Tutekoro cured
By stripes and blows that fall alway
And arduous toiling, day by day."
"Not so," said Tama, "thou must yet
Some penance do, lest thou forget
How grave thy fault; how virtue's crown
Once in the mud and mire cast down
Cannot be worn again at will,
But in the mire must wallow still.

Awhile must thou continue here
And Tutekoro's shackles wear;
But when my shining sails adorn
The azure ocean in the morn,
Then boldly plunge into the sea
And seek a pathway unto me."
Thus Tama spake, and left her there
Dejected in the autumn air.

The many voices of the main
Spoke loud in anger, and the rain
Released its torrents, while the wind
Draggled the tattered clouds behind
Its chariot, and the ship that bore
Brave Tama to the distant shore,
Where dwelt his wife, rolled to and fro
As if possessed by some fierce woe;
For by strange arts and spells of might
Did Tutekoro strive to blight
The journey o'er the ocean plain
And make the quest of Tama vain.

But, lo! the Powers for Tama fought,
And through the tempest safely brought
His vessel, till the troubled sea
Lay wrapped in soft tranquillity.
Then rose the monsters of the deep,
The kraken, shark, and things that leap
In vast and shapeless mass from out
The water in a bubbling rout,
And fiercely Tama's ship assailed.
But his superior craft prevailed;
The monstrous brood the chieftain feared,
And in the abyss disappeared.

Upon a platform high and strong,
Lashed fast to posts with many a thong
Where safe the people kept their food,
One morning Rukutia stood
And watched the surges as they leapt
Ere rustling o'er the sand they crept;
Then lifting up her eyes perceived,
Though doubting she might be deceived,
A stranger vessel, coming nigh
And nigher as the hours passed by
Until its swelling sails shone bright,
Resplendent in the sunny light,
And Tama, as the fresh winds blew,
Was seen to rule the toiling crew.
"O people all, my husband see,
With shining sails he comes for me,"
Said Rukutia, and the folk
Gathered about her as she spoke.
The bark approached till Tama's voice
Made Rukutia's heart rejoice;
Then plunging in, with courage high,
She clove the great waves fearlessly,
Until she felt all danger passed
Her hands by those of Tama clasped.

How strange the passions of the heart!
Fitful they come, and so depart,
Resistless is their transient sway,
And then repentance has its day.
Fierce jealousy a moment filled
The soul of Tama, and it thrilled
With vengeance, so he took the life
Of Rukutia, his own wife;

But scarcely had her spirit fled
Unto the regions of the dead
Than Tama knew what pains remorse
Can bring when flowing in full force.
The senseless body o'er the main
He bore unto his home again,
Then in the house a grave he made
And to the corse much honour paid,
The precious kura wrapped around
Ere it was buried in the ground.

Through the long winter Tama grieved
Like one who finds himself bereaved
Of all that erstwhile gave life zest,
The very fount of happiness;
But when the spring leaves 'gan appear
Hope whispered in his startled ear
That, by some strange and wondrous chance,
Awakening from a baleful trance,
His wife might yet become his mate,
Reviving from her deathlike state.
With anxious mind his hands unclosed
The casket where his love reposed,
And lo! upon her face was born
A smile as welcome as the dawn.

THE BATTLE OF THE SEA BIRDS WITH THE LAND BIRDS

Lone, beneath the southern sky,
Rugged, rocky islands lie;
There the sea, in foamy flakes,
O'er the scattered boulders breaks,
Sometimes, in an angry mood,
Casting up a 'whelming flood,
Bearing in its frantic sweep
Many spoils from out the deep,
While perchance a wind may come
From its grim Antarctic home,
Bred amid the fields of ice
Far beyond the precipice
Which the pathless region lone
Girdles with a frigid zone.

In these island solitudes
Albatrosses rear their broods,
Mollymawk and screaming gull,
Solemn penguin, fat and full;
Here the seal, devoid of grace,
Finds a quiet resting-place,
Basking on the wave-worn rocks
At whose base the salt sea knocks.

Thus it is, and was in days
Ere the tattooed Maori's gaze
Saw the land that Maui drew,
Fishing from his weird canoe,
Up from ocean's lowest deeps
Where the monstrous kraken creeps,
Or the land whose rocky glade
Hides the green and precious jade.

'Twas in such primæval time,
Ere the world grew to its prime,
That the ocean birds began
To debate amongst their clan
Of their hard and wretched life,
Passed in unremitting strife,
Battling with all winds that blow,
Scorching in the sun's fierce glow,
All around the watery main
Spreading wide its barren plain ;
Bosky dell, nor shade of hill,
Meadows green, nor rippling rill,
None of these relieved their lot,
With no woof of pleasure shot.
" By what word of adverse Fate
Are we doomed to this drear state,
Roaming e'er with tired wings
While the land bird sits and sings—
Singing with the joy that rolls
Freely from enraptured souls ? "
Thus the albatross expressed
Thoughts that shook the sea-birds' breast.

. . . . . .

From the dim horizon came,
Like a rushing flood of flame,
Feathered legions, great and small,
Mad with anger, one and all.
Brown and white their pinions were,
Staunchly buffeting the air,
And the clamour of their wrath
Drove the clouds from out their path.
Nor were they a lawless horde
Gathered by a chance accord,
But an army on its way
To assail the enemy;
In a phalanx rising high,
Rank on rank they clomb the sky,
Every tribe in order flew,
Each its chosen leader knew,
While the albatross was made
Sovereign chieftain of the raid.

When the dews of morning fell,
Sparkling in each forest dell,
Then the bell bird with its chime
Ushered in the sweet daytime,
With a clear and silver note
Gushing from its joyous throat;
And throughout the summer day,
Save when noontide's searching ray
Caused the blood to slack its flow
For an idle hour or so,
Birds of varied hue and size,
Music sparkling in their eyes,
Twittered, chirruped, full of glee,

Oft burst into melody:
'Mid the forest trees, immense,
Where the clinging vines grow dense,
In the rocky glens forlorn,
Where the fields of ice are born,
On the wind-swept, tussocked plain,
Quivering like the ocean main,
On the open, fern-clad wold,
'Neath a sapphire sky unrolled—
Everywhere a choric lay
Made the country-side seem gay;
While the silent moa was seen
Stalking with a royal mien,
As if strain with sweet strain blent
Were for his own pleasure meant.
Since man first by aid of song
Sought proud memories to prolong,
Battle fierce and din of war,
Victory in triumphant car,
Themes have been of poets' lays
Where heroic deeds have praise,
But no pen of poet fired,
By the heavenly Muses fired,
Could depict in graphic guise
Like a scene before the eyes
War of land birds with the sea
Fighting for the mastery.
Feathered hordes obscured the sun,
O'er the land hung darkness dun,
Raucous cries and screamings shrill
Echoed loud from every hill;
Conflict raging, far and near,
Earth had never seen its peer.

Fell at last the wild uproar
On the ear of Tangaroa,
Mighty lord of land and flood
But, supreme, the ocean god.
Far beneath the flashing foam
Lies his golden palace home;
Man hath never seen his face,
Nor his royal path can trace
When, enrobed with fleecy mists,
Glittering like amethysts,
Tangaroa, in his pride,
Walks upon the trembling tide.
Round him bask the ocean herds,
While unnumbered flocks of birds
Sailing through the yielding air
Bid th' expectant world prepare
To pay homage at the nod
Of the sovereign ocean god.

From the utmost depths of sea
With impressive majesty
Rose the god until he viewed
The unpeopled solitude,
Vainly seeking with proud glance
The birds who owed allegiance;
But from off the distant shore
Came the angry hum of war,
Clangour of the fowl enraged,
War by sea on land birds waged,
Horrid shriekings, strident cries,
Reaching to the azure skies.

Then his brows in wrath were knit,
His great eyes fierce anger lit,
While the tumult of his breast
Was in thund'rous words expressed:
"Back, ye recreant sea fowls, come,
Back unto your ocean home,
Fate has given you to the sea,
Such your lot and destiny,
Hope not to escape what throes
Powers above you may impose—
Every creature has its thorn
In its secret bosom worn;
Your first duty to appear
When I breathe the upper air,
And my guard be while I stay
Moving in the light of day.
Quickly to your posts return,
Lest my wrath more fiercely burn,
And you suffer direst woe
Such as all the world shall know."

Lo! the noise of many wings
And the shades of flying things,
Cries repentant, cries of fear,
Filled and shook the atmosphere.

TINIRAU AND HINA

THROUGHOUT the compass of the Maori land
The fame of Tinirau was trumpeted;
He was a chieftain of a noble stock,
The gallant leader of his tribe in war,
And handsome as the golden sun at noon,
Apollo of his race. Stately of mien,
He walked a prince amongst the herd of men,
By Nature fashioned for supreme command.
In her far-distant dwelling Hina heard
The murmur of his fame, but most her thoughts
Dwelt on his much-praised beauty, till her heart
Felt hungry for his presence, and desire
Grew up and blossomed. Then she knew no rest,
Nor ceased to dream and dream how she might gain
The prize on which her longing heart was set;
For she was skilled in those recondite arts
That men impute to bad and evil souls
And yet would fain possess: the wizard power
To penetrate behind the awful veil
That parts the seen from the invisible
And hides strange wonders; the power to weave and weave
Spells strong and potent to achieve an end.
So Hina, filled with fire of Tinirau,
A journey made unto a pleasant grove
Where fern trees overhung pellucid pools
Of waveless water, crystal clear, and deep,

Whose polished surface mirrored like a glass
The lineaments of every living thing
That gazed a moment there ; in number three,
Each pool was bordered by a mossy frame,
And here and there a rustic seat enjoined
The idler to recline in grateful ease.
Full oft by Tinirau this spot was sought
That he might view his perfect form and face
Reflected in the water, drinking joy
From his own beauty ; and a pride welled up
And overflowed his soul when he beheld
The perfect image of himself revealed.
But Hina, reaching this umbrageous haunt,
With eager foot and palpitating breast,
Was baulked awhile of what she most desired,
For sullen slaves alone were idling there.
Then she, pretending madness, 'gan to break
The rustic seats and wildly tear the moss
From off the trees, and thrilled the placid air
With frantic cries. The timid slaves, deceived,
Made haste to warn their master of the fray,
While Hina, flushed and joyful at her ruse,
Arranged her flaxen garments with a grace
Alluring and refined. Her jet-black hair
Was bound in wavy tresses, and she stood
The model of a woman ripe and fair,
Who willing waits the man for her designed,
And, standing thus, was found by Tinirau.
Their love was sudden as the rush of day
In tropic climes, for they twin souls were born
When Venus' star illumed the ebon sky ;
Ambrosial hours they gave to converse sweet,
Nor were they by the pangs of hunger driven

To leave the shelter of this bower of love,
For Hina by enchantment made a feast,
Rich and profuse, brought from the viewless air
By spirits who were servants of her craft,
Themselves invisible to Tinirau.
And so they revelled, and their hearts were gay,
Nor heeded lest their merriment should be
To others but the wormwood and the gall.
When jealousy awakes wild storms of wrath
And passion fills the breast, then reason flies
And murder stalks red-handed 'mid the strife.
The slighted wives of Tinirau, who erst
Had tasted all his love, but now were left
Alone to brood upon their bitter wrongs,
Made common cause against a common foe,
The twain devoting Hina unto death;
And when their lord had quitted her awhile
They fell upon her suddenly with clubs
To beat her life away. But she, forewarned
By some familiar sprite, with magic power
O'ercame their earthly weapons, and they died.

It was the twilight hour when sober peace
Makes tranquil happiness, and Hina sat
Beside the wharé while her little child
With many gambols played, and Tinirau
Mused what the future of his son might be.
More quickly beat the father's heart as thoughts
Of how the boy might gain a warrior's fame
And great renown amongst the peoples round
Surged in his brain; the future years loomed bright
With lustre shed from Glory's rising star.
Alas! our happiness is oft a dream,

A fleeting vision ; gone, ere scarcely seen ;
And such the luckless fate of Tinirau,
For slowly came across the azure sea
A strange-shaped phantom. Like a giant owl
In form it seemed ; in substance but a mist,
Impalpable, and sparkling to the eye.
So drifting onward soon it came to rest,
While from its dim penumbra there emerged
A man whose face to Hina's was akin.
" Rupe, my brother," was her startled cry,
Half joyful, yet replete with secret fear,
Not comprehending his most weird disguise.
Then Tinirau, though much foreboding ill
From Rupe's visit and the strangeness of
His coming from the sea, 'natheless proffered
The welcome that the Maori chieftain gives
To such as please him well, and so they spent
In converse many an hour until deep sleep,
By Rupe's art from clouds of darkness brought,
Oppressed the chieftain's brain ; and when he woke
The sun was shining and the birds were gay,
But Hina and her much-loved son were gone.

The dolphin wallowed in the sounding sea,
The splendid dolphin that enshrined the soul
Of Tutunui, mighty chief of yore,
Renowned progenitor of Tinirau.
The dolphin wallowed in the sounding sea,
And, mounted on his back, the chief bereaved
Sought Hina and the child.
About him flew the seagulls that obeyed
His signified behests ; the spirits they
Of warriors of his tribe, whose bones were laid

To rest, and slept in peace their final sleep;
But still their souls lived on, for what can quench
The fire that animates the human soul?
The seagulls mewed, and screamed their mournful cries,
Their hoarse wails echoing o'er the barren deep,
And now and then, as from the verdant land
The curling smoke uprose, the sign of men,
The flock together flew unto the shore,
Looking for Hina—but the search was vain.
Thus passed the weary days, and Tinirau
Despondent grew, and feared lest he no more
Should see his loves. But, lo! a prodigy
Awakened hope. From out the rising dawn
A pearl-clad creature, with translucent sails,
Came floating o'er the surface of the vast
Cerulean ocean; it was a nautilus,
But huge in size, as in primæval times,
When Earth, as yet by man untenanted,
On sea and land gave birth to living things
Colossal. Onward it slowly sailed
And gleamed resplendent in the morning sun,
A fairy vision from another world.
Nigh unto Tinirau it drew, and he
Beheld upon this frail and wondrous bark
An erstwhile comrade on the field of war;
Kae was his name, his lineage long and high.
Most welcome was his face to Tinirau,
Each to the other soon his story told,
And Tinirau gave play unto his grief,
Bewailed the fate which from his side had reft
His wife and child, thus leaving him forlorn.
"O friend of mine, take thou my nautilus,
And let it waft thee o'er the throbbing sea,

Its wisdom's great; and it shall bear thee safe
Unto the land where now thy loved ones dwell."
Such were the words of Kae; and Tinirau,
Made captain of the pearl-clad nautilus,
Yielded his dolphin to the care of Kae.
So parted they; each one unto his quest.
Hope whispered to the heart of Tinirau,
That soon the wheel of Fate again would turn
And wife and child be unto him restored.
So Tinirau composed this chant and sang,
His voice resounding o'er the spacious deep:

"Loved one, thy voice is chiming in my heart,
Its tones are tingling in my ravished ears;
Though we in body may be far apart,
Yet still I feel thy spirit hovering near."

Night slowly drew its dusky mantle o'er
The sky's exalted dome. Unnumbered gems
Relieved its blackness, while the ocean rose
And fell as if with life endued,
Slow-driven by a cool and gentle breeze.
The quaint and living craft bore on the chief
Not knowing where he went; but calm through faith
That destiny had shot her bolt, and soon
He would behold the forms to him so dear.
The depths of ocean gleamed with many fires,
A flaming wake broke from the nautilus
As it skimmed o'er and clove the heaving sea.
So passed the night, and then the morning bloomed
And spread its colours o'er a foreign coast;
With joyous acclamation screamed the gulls
As headland after headland opened full,
Nor had the sun attained the highest noon
Ere the long quest of Tinirau had ceased.

MARAMA AND INA

In the ages that have vanished
Down the deep abyss of Time,
Where the memory of men's actions
Passes like a fleeting chime,
Oft some deity descended
From the mansions of the sky,
And the blood of men was blended
With blood of divinity.

Shapely are the island maidens,
And their black eyes, laughing, gleam
Like the sun's reflected radiance
Flashing from a mountain stream.
Fairest of them all was Ina,
Daughter of a royal race,
Many a noble youth had wooed her,
Worshipping her smiling face;
But her heart, though often yielding,
From love's meshes still was free,
For she heard a voice resounding,
Promising high destiny.
Then the spirit of her fathers
Stirred the pulses of her blood,
And love's pleadings were forgotten
'Mid ambition's torrent flood.

In his silver palace lonely
Sat Marama, moon god, there
Viewing his dominions, glorious
Monarch of the upper air—
Saw the old Earth marching slowly
Through the dusky realms of night
Onward to the pure and holy
Region of sunlight,
And beheld where Ina wandered
Musing on the ocean shore
With the mien of one who pondered
On a lofty fate in store.
Fell the mighty breakers, sweeping
All the beach with sheets of flame,
Wave on wave successive creeping
Nigh and nigher to her came;
But her footsteps hesitated,
While love made her bosom warm,
And night's shadows palpitated
At the beauty of her form.
Then a 'whelming flood of passion
Flushed the god's immortal breast,
As the sun in tropic mornings
Sudden shows his flaming crest,
And Marama, dight with splendour,
Rising from his star-girt throne,
With a wondrous radiance clothed her
Walking on the beach alone.
Down the slopes of Heaven with stately
Steps he travelled to the isle,
To the maiden whom he laboured
With soft flatteries to beguile—
Told to her the old, sweet story

Spoke by man in woman's ear
Since the days of Eden's glory
When love filled the atmosphere.
Nor in vain the monarch pleaded,
For the glamour of his tongue
Through the chambers of her feelings
With seductive cadence rung.
Thus the god, by passion driven,
Came to Earth to woo the maid,
And the glory of his presence
Made the people much afraid.
To the ebon sky translated,
On soft clouds of silver borne,
There was lovely Ina mated
To Marama, moon god lorn.

INA

The wondrous Heaven, where time and space are not,
Nor sun, nor moon, nor stars, nor night, nor morn,
But rapture welling from its very spring,
And light celestial giving happiness,
Gleamed full and clear. A meadow oped its lawn
Profusely strewn with flowers of asphodel,
And there amidst the bloom and verdure stood
Ina, the goddess touched with human love
That yet impaired not her diviner self,
And, gazing on her face, the man whom she
Had chosen in the heyday of his prime
To be her husband; thus was mortal wed
To an immortal dwelling with the gods.
But now his hair was grey, his beauty fled,
And age with sordid trappings wrapped him round,
While Ina glowed with everlasting youth.
"The fateful hour is come," the goddess said,
"Whose sombre expectation has oft mixed
A little bitter in a cup of joy,
And we can meet no more; for thou and I,
Though joined in happy union for a while,
Must henceforth in our separate orbits move.
Soon wilt thou have fulfilled thy tale of what
By mortals years are called, and thou wilt die,
Descending to the shades of nether worlds,

Where darkness looms, and forms impalpable ;
But my divine and endless being holds
The gift of countless æons, and shall sail
Perpetually an ocean of delight,
Yet we have loved as men and women love
And quaffed a nectar mingling Earth and sky,
Dreamed our sweet dreams, and lived a single life—
If our communings can be called a life.
To me a transient pleasure has accrued,
A fresh delight, and it shall be for aye
A memory dear ; to thee a glorious boon
That ne'er before had been vouchsafed to man
Since first the world by Tane was revealed."
" Loved Ina," spake the man—whose name is hid
Amidst the clouds and darkness of the Past,
While only comes to us the memory of his lot—
" The shadow of this dreadful hour has long
Flecked o'er my path ; though oft by me forgot
Amidst the soft allurements of thy love,
Yet still returning when I mused alone.
But I have breathed with thee the subtle air
That feeds the spirit of the gods, and thus
Can bear unflinchingly the stroke of Fate."
Then, by the goddess fashioned, leapt a bow
Convex from sky to land, a wondrous road
With colours blazoned o'er its archèd length ;
Such was the road resplendent Ina made
For her reluctant husband to descend
Unto the seagirt isle where he was born.
One last embrace he took, and saw the eyes
Of Ina, lustrous, gleaming, flushed with tears,
Rebelling from necessity's decree,
Then down the dazzling road unwilling went

Until his sad and laggard feet had reached
His boyhood's home.
The palm trees rustled in the evening breeze,
The village slept beside the tree-clad hill,
The surf fell softly on the coral shore,
All things seemed fashioned as in days of yore.

THE MAEROERO *

STRANGE were the folk of the forest,
A fleeting, invisible band,
Strange were their voices that murmured
In the depths of the sylvan land.

No man ever saw them in being,
Nor their fashion nor size could tell,
But their ways and manner of life
The birds of the forest know well.

No traveller ever perchance
Their secrets discerned by surprise,
Fern seed was the victual that gave
Them concealment from mortal eyes.

Heard were the sounds of Maeroero,
The voices of young and of old,
When Wakatip's mountains untrod
The mists of the morn did enfold.

* The ancient Maoris believed that in the recesses of the forest dwelt mysterious beings whom no man had seen, although their voices were often heard. The Maoris' ideas of the nature of these beings were vague, but the forest dwellers seem to have been regarded as akin to man.

Their voices in scattered tones fell
  Like gems dropping down from the sky;
Unknown was the language they spake,
  But its music was born of a sigh.

Did the Maeroero spring from Earth,
  Or children were they of the air,
Haunting mountain and forest awhile,
  Then departing for realms more fair?

Perchance from th' uncounted hosts
  Who inhabit the spaces that reach
From planet to planet, and hear
  The surge on the Sun's gleaming beach,

Some wandering spirits may come
  To visit the Earth for a time,
Repose 'mid the green of its woods
  Made glad by the tui's sweet chime.

THE MAORIS' EMIGRATION FROM HAWAIKI

NIGH the carven prows stood
With a frenzy possessed
The priest whose warm blood
Trickled fast from his breast,
And the vessels in various devices and ochreous colours were drest.

'Twas a time of great woe,
And vague oracles spake
That much people must go
To the southward and make
New homes in the land of Te Kupe, in the land of the forest and lake.

Nor was silent the voice
That appeals to the souls
Of such as rejoice
When the drum of war rolls
And the hope of adventure upsprings though the fateful bell of death tolls.

To the sea-god he prayed,
While the people hard by
Saw the smoke from the glade
Stealing up to the sky
From Tangaroa's altar whose flames gleamed with lustre that dazzled the eye.

And the priest, in his trance,
Deemed the omen was good
When, lifting his glance
From the place where he stood,
He saw, from the deep sea uprising, an albatross stately and good.

On the white, coral strand
By the creamy waves swept;
On the rim of the land
Where the sea urchins crept,
The keelless canoes were assembled, for a voyage in readiness set.

Far o'er the wide ocean
The seagulls were circling,
Unceasing their motion
Their voices aye skirling,
The body-guard they of Tangaroa great when from the deep whirling

Through the white, boiling foam
Like a mountain upborne
He views the vast dome
Of Te Rangi, and lorn
Wild waste of blue water whose breast by the hands of the breezes is torn.

By the charms the priest sang
Were the listeners stirred,
And their throbbing hearts sprang
To the words which they heard,
While their shouts affrighted the welkin where the Sun his gold raiment did gird.

And the women kept time
  In a swift-changing dance,
In alternate rhyme
  They retreat, then advance,
Their lithe bodies swaying and panting as they sought their charms to enhance.

When the rites were complete
  The canoes were set free,
Like dolphins the fleet
  Sought the arms of the sea,
The waters bore proudly the parents of a numerous people to be.

To the southward they sailed
  O'er the track of the Sun,
As Te Rangi it scaled
  Till the zenith was won,
Like a man who by toil and endeavour a mighty achievement hath done.

For ever departed
  Hawaiki was gone,
From those gallant-hearted
  Adventurers torn,
But in the bright hues of the morning new lands and new wonders were born.

A STORY OF MANGAIA *

Amongst the sunny islands that begem
The vast Pacific, which unceasingly
With thunderous and swelling organ peals
Its diapason round the Southern globe,
Mangaia gleams. The light of Christian faith
Now floods its verdant hills, sweet peace prevails
And man holds forth a friendly hand to man;
But in the days of yore, ere men grew wise,
And heathen gods throughout the island reigned,
Rapine and slaughter ofttimes stalked abroad,
While hill and valley echoed with the shout
That greets the cannibal's inhuman feast.

Full many a moon had looked with lustrous eye,
Compassionate, upon a little band,
Sole remnant of a tribe that once could rank
A thousand warriors when the battle rolled,
But now well-nigh extinct through bloody war,
Who in a secret cavern hid themselves
By day from those who hungered for their lives,
And in the shades of night made haste to glean
A meagre sustenance from berries harsh
Or such rude fare as could be gathered near
Their rugged home. Perchance, by famine drive

* Mangaia is an island of the Hervey Group.

Some spirit bold, with cautious step and slow,
Crept to the rocky coast, and cast a lure
Into a quiet haven where the fish
Might readily become the angler's prey.

The sun had set, the curtains of the eve
Were drawn across the portals of the sky,
While o'er the dim and far horizon peered
A giant moon, when issuing from the cave
Inangaro, the chief, roamed through a grove
Looking for berries. Lo! just at its marge,
Where tree and herbage wed, a basket filled
With luscious taro met his famished gaze.
Fierce thought and rapid stirred his busy brain,
How to secure the precious food and yet
Escape detection. To steal the taro,
Then seek swift covert, or slay the owner,
Alike would warn the foe that Teipe's clan
Was lingering still amongst the tribes of Earth.
As thus he turned the chances o'er and o'er,
Nor could devise a plan to gain his end,
A maid approached with joyous step and light
To claim the basket laid aside while she
Engaged in merry chatter with her kind.
Then Inangaro, with tongue mellifluous,
Flattered the startled girl, nor spared to praise
Her many charms, and told his sorry lot,
Till love and pity melted her kind heart
And she to him the welcome taro gave
With many a pledge that from her father's tribe
She would the secret keep. Then they exchanged
Love tokens. For swiftly as the tropic sun
Leaps up the morning sky and floods the world

With burning rays, so love in torrid climes
Ardent and sudden flushes man and maid.
Yet though they plighted troth they still were twain
Love to Inaango was the purest bliss
But to Inangaro it meant more food.
So weeks passed by, and still Inaango came,
Nor ever failed to bring the welcome food
Of which the fugitives alike partook,
For they by common danger were beset,
And common stock was made of all they gained.

But misery often in the train of love
Follows with silent step. And so it happed.
For Ngaae, brother of Inangaro,
And younger, wandered forth one fateful day
And sought a gloomy ravine where the dim
Weird forest clothed the shattered rocks
And made strange twilight; there, in solitude
(So deemed by him), he roamed, and eager plucked
Pandanus fruit, a coarse and scanty fare;
Until he came unto a banyan tree
Whose many-columned trunks and snaky roots
Were scattered o'er a wondrous space of ground.
Beside it stood a girl, who blithely sang
As with deft hand she stripped the fibrous bark
That woven with rare skill would make the rude
Barbaric garments worn throughout the isle.
Kurauri was her name, and in the days
When peace prevailed and she was but a child
Ofttimes had she and little Ngaae played
And romped together, bubbling o'er with fun,
But now she numbered Ngaae with the dead,
Slain with his clan. So when the playmates met

Surprise and pleasure flushed her merry face,
And Ngaae felt his blood grow warm again.
Delightful was their converse; much they talked
Of happy days of childhood, when they recked
Not of the morrow, but spent joyful hours
Gay as the murmurings of a sunlit brook.
Nor was the food that Kurauri had brought—
Refreshment for the intervals of toil—
The less enjoyed because of bygone days.
The sun was sinking low ere Kurauri
Spake her farewell, but made another tryst,
'Twas thus by women twain these hunted men
Obtained relief, and yet they had been blessed
If such relief had never them befell;
For when Inangaro saw Kurauri
The flame of ardent love sprang up and flashed
Within his breast, and day by day it waxed
In strength, until the flambent courses filled
His inmost being. Then Ngaae, younger born,
Left to his brother what he most desired
(Such was the custom of the olden time),
And so Kurauri brought a train of woe.
It chanced one day that when Inaango came
Well laden with the welcome provender—
Some fish just captured by her skilful hands—
Unto the cavern which the remnant clan
Had made their home, she found Kurauri there;
Nor did the wit that sharpens women's minds
When they pursue the devious paths of love
Fail to perceive that oft Inangaro
And Kurauri were kind, and thus disclosed
A sweet intelligence between the two.
Swift come the mordant pangs of jealousy—

A spasm crossed Inaango's handsome face,
But vanished in bright smiles, nor e'er a sign
Betrayed the lurking devil in her heart.
" Farewell to all," she said; " be safety yours,
And happy days and nights for you in store."
Her loving looks dwelt on Inangaro,
And issuing to the open she was gone.
Nor long her vengeance slumbered or was still,
For scarce the morning's sun again uprose
Ere rang the cavern with the raucous shouts
And warlike yells of fierce and barbarous men.
Tumultuous rushed the horde into the cave,
Thirsting for slaughter. Useless to relate
The dread encounter, or how each was slain;
Some fighting manfully, some clubbed to death
Helpless and slow awakening from their sleep,
The life was battered from the fugitives
Save Ngaae alone. He Kurauri prayed
Might be her husband while he was her slave,
The guerdon of her wild and jealous deed.
'Twas thus the clan of Teipe passed away
Like leaves before the roaring hurricane,
Save Ngaae, but his lot was hard, for he,
A chief, was ruled when he himself should rule,
And made a woman's slave—ignoble fate!

THE LAST OF THE MOAS

THE voices of the sea were heard afar
From where the waves broke o'er the sandy bar,
And sweeping onward, clad in robes of foam,
In lines of flashing surges, comb on comb,
They sank to rest upon the peaceful strand
That fringed the coast of a green Southern land.

To all the world but some few men alone
It was a land untravelled and unknown,
Its people sparse and scattered here and there,
Their dwellings grouped in hamlets rude and rare—
A barbarous race, whom uncouth vessels bore,
By war expelled, from Hawaiki's shore.
Few years had passed since first the Maoris viewed
Zealandia's forests, clothed with solitude,
Nor knew they yet what creatures fierce or strange
Might in ravine, o'er mountain, or through forest range;
They saw the steam from boiling geysers rise
In fleecy clouds ascending to the skies,
The grim volcano smoked, and oft a sound
Reverberated 'neath the trembling ground.
Lo! Earth has many marvels, and the sea
Is but a casket filled with mystery.

The voices of the sea came from afar
In muffled roarings, where the morning star

Looked on a lofty mount, whose rugged form
Was scarred and battered by the frequent storm.
One flank shot up, a sheer and dizzy wall,
That none could clamber—e'en a goat would fall;
And at its foot, half-hid by trees and fern,
A cavern's open mouth yawned wide and stern.

Within the rock, by many a devious way,
And passages scarce 'lumined by the day,
It led to chambers, rich with stalactite,
Fantastic gleaming in a chastened light.
Their fretted roofs, which dimly loomed on high,
Seemed but a vision and a fantasy,
A floating dream, replete with glories wan,
The canopy of Oberon.
Here dwelt the last of an illustrious race
Of noble birth, unmatched in strength and grace;
Their forms were fashioned from a giant stock
Whence sprang in Eastern climes the mighty roc.
Once in vast flocks they roamed the tussocked plain,
Or swelling down, or where the hills again
Gave luscious pasture; and the feathered host
Filled all the land with pride, from coast to coast;
But as the sluggish centuries passed away
So waned the moa in numbers, fitfully,
Then died apace, like leaves that fall from trees
When freshly soughs the chilly Autumn breeze,
Until at last one kingly bird alone
Was left to mourn his ancient line o'erthrown.

Full oft the Maori saw the bird afar,
At early dawn or when the evening star

Peeped gently from the slowly darkening sky
And gazed upon the globe with modest eye,
Depasturing near its home ; with stately tread
The moa roamed abroad, and oft its head
Was proudly raised, and then with royal mien
It looked the sovereign of the whole terrene.
Hard by the kumi dread ; no eye could brook
The flaming terror of his wrathful look ;
The monarch he of all the reptile brood,
In size like such as lived before the flood ;
His port was that of some majestic seer
Who dwells amid a sacred atmosphere ;
In distant age the horoscope was drawn,
Ere yet the kumi or the moa was born,
By which their destinies were made but one
To end together when life's work was done.

The Maori saw them, but had never heard
The voice of kumi or of wondrous bird.
If voice they had none fell on human ears,
For, yielding to the tremor of their fears,
Nor man, nor woman, e'er approached the spot
Where bird and beast fulfilled their destined lot ;
They seemed but shadows and the loom of things,
Dim visions born of vague imaginings.

Strange creatures, coming from we know not whence,
A season flitting o'er the world's expanse !
Like cloudlets drifting o'er the boundless sky,
Awhile partaking of its destiny,
Then growing dim they melt in space away,
And leave the world for ever and for aye.

MAUI AND MAHUIKA

MAUI, demigod and sprite,
Darkness mingled with the light,
Author of diablerie,
Mischief and strange fantasy,
Skilled in knowledge dread and weird,
Magic arts by all men feared;
Sometimes woke the god, and then
Maui blessed the race of men,
With rich wisdom and fell power
Helped them in the darkest hour.
Cradled in the ocean foam,
Such was Maui's infant home,
And the monsters of the deep
Rocked him in sea wrack to sleep;
Safe the sea-wolf passed him by,
Seafowl sang his lullaby;
Earth and ocean fashioned him,
But a fire divine within
Made great thoughts and fancies roll
Through the chambers of his soul.
This a legend that was told
In the Maori days of old,
How that Maui's diablesse
Succoured man in dire distress.

. . . . . .

On the people's faces lay
Lines of care and sore dismay,

For but now they saw expire
Embers of their only fire.
All the country was distressed
By unnumbered fears oppressed;
Men were ignorant and rude,
And they cooked their barbarous food
With fires lit by brands they bore
From old fires that flamed before,
Untutored yet to cunningly
Chase the spark from out the tree.
Fierce Despair its leaden hand
Placed upon the gloomy land.

Lo! a pigeon clove the air
Beautiful beyond compare;
Lustrous gleamed each splendid hue
As on sun-kissed wings it flew
Onwards, onwards, lightly borne
By the winds to caves forlorn,
Portals of the realms that lie
Shadowed by Death's canopy.
Masking thus, in feathered guise,
From the ken of human eyes,
Maui boldly sought to wrest
From the lower world's dark breast
Knowledge that mankind had not—
How that fire could be begot.
Soon a precipice shot high,
Towering to the sunny sky,
At its foot a cavern gaped,
Brambles rough the entrance draped.
Deftly flew the wily bird,
Scarce its subtle wings were heard

As a devious way it made
To the cavern's awful shade.
Faltered not its pinions' beat
When it saw the dread retreat;
Onward! onward! down the cave,
Whose resonant echoes gave
Voice unto the pigeon's flight
Drifting slowly from the light.
Tortuous was the cave and long,
Days uncounted flowed along
While the bird its course pursued
With a generous thought imbued;
Till from out the dark it swirled,
Plunged into the nether world.
Casting off his bird-like guise,
Proudly stood Maui the wise,
Reared erect a giant frame,
Flashed his eyes of glowing flame,
Then the ghostly realm he strode
Where the souls of chiefs abode.

Lo, the sacred manapou!
Sacred every leaf and bough!
Tree whose vast, umbrageous head
Shades the meadows of the dead,
By its rugged roots and great
Maui's parents idly sate.
Ghosts they were, yet seemed to be
Clothed with warm mortality.
"Parents mine," thus Maui said,
"Dwelling with the mighty dead,
Hence I come upon strange quest
To assist mankind distressed,

Seeking for the fire that leaps
In the frame of her who keeps
Stores in her immortal veins,
Goddess of the fire and flames.
Tell me, parents mine, the road
Leading to her high abode."
"Son beloved, on summit high,
Where the mountains touch the sky,
Mahuika dwells alone,
Girdled with a mystic zone.
Rocks up-piled and chasms rude
Guard her haughty solitude,
Forests dense conceal the way
Where the traveller doth stray
Vacillating in his mind
Like a leaf tossed by the wind;
And 'tis said that beings strange
Fearsome through the forests range,
What the traveller's fate may be
Meeting them none can foresee.
But if not deterred by these
Perils and uncertainties
Still the quest you must pursue,
Keep the palm grove full in view
Where its greenery doth limn
Sitting on the forest's rim;
Enter there the shaggy wood,
Boldly dare its solitude."
Thus the ghostly parents gave
Counsel to Maui the brave.

. . . . . .

"Mahuika! give, I pray,
Fire unto me that I may

Kindle on the hearths of men
Cheerful glowings once again—
Fire by which man's food may be
Made to eat more pleasantly,
While the folk in converse meet
Round the ruddy flashings' heat."
Such was Maui's earnest prayer
Uttered in the mountain air.
But the goddess did not heed
Maui's pleading, or man's need,
Frowning, bade him backward turn,
To the dædal world return,
Nor again, with footsteps rude,
Violate her solitude.
Lo! the word-storm idly played,
Unabashed and unafraid
Maui still his suit did ply
With strong pertinacity,
Till the goddess, filled with ire,
From her fingers flecked the fire;
From each finger leapt a flame,
Like a living thing it came.
Ere the flame could pass away
Prisoned and confined it lay
In a casket Maui bore,
Fashioned 'twas by magic lore,
Then with heart exultant he
Left the angry deity.
Soon the sprite within his breast
'Gan itself to manifest,
Open he the casket threw
And the flames from bondage flew,
Vanished like a dream that dies

When the morning opes its eyes.
Maui then, with back low bent,
Unto Mahuika went,
With a sad, dejected air,
Proffered a respectful prayer,
Told how he by chance had left
'Twixt lid and jar a little cleft,
Safe away the flames did slink
Creeping through this little chink,
And he Mahuika prayed
To renew her former aid.
Nor was the orison vain,
For the goddess once again
Caused the ruddy flame to flow,
Every finger was aglow.
Maui soon the casket filled
With the precious fire distilled
From th' alembic's subtle bowl
In the goddess' sacred soul;
Thus with artful guile did he
Gain his end by trickery,
Nor was then content, but lied
For a second time, and tried
The craft that he before had used,
Not deeming he would be refused.
But the goddess saw the cheat,
Brooked no more the foul deceit;
Wrath, commingled with surprise,
Looked through her immortal eyes,
And uprising in her might
Shot fierce flames of dazzling light
Like a flood of roaring fire
Gushing from her wakened ire.

Fast and faster Maui fled
From the flames that sought to wed
Him in their despised embrace.
Thus was run a deadly race,
Burned the forest, burned the ground,
Flames and smoke rose all around.
Maui then, in hope to 'scape,
Changed into an eagle's shape,
On swift pinions safety sought,
For his heart with fear was fraught;
But the fierce flames mounted higher,
Seemed the world a blazing pyre.
Then with voice whose thund'rous sound
Pealed the mighty welkin round
To his ancestors, the gods
Whose divine, resistless nods
Rains and floods alike obey,
He made orison to stay
The vast conflagration's rage
And its passion to assuage.
Nor did they withhold their aid
From great Maui as he prayed,
Oped the floodgates of the sky
And the rains fell lavishly,
Washed the water here and there,
Torrents flowing everywhere,
Till the very earth was drenched,
And the hungry flames were quenched.
Maui, in his eagle form,
Fled before the friendly storm,
He the magic casket bore
Laden with its precious store
To the cheerful world above
Where the people live and love.

THE COMING OF CAPTAIN COOK TO NEW ZEALAND

A SHIP came sailing from the tropic isles
Where Nature with a sunny face beguiles
The heart of man to slothful ease and play
And love that whiles the happy hours away.
On southward course by favouring breezes borne
Her captain with an anxious eye each morn
The watery waste and far horizon scanned
For that imagined continental land
Once deemed beneath the Southern Cross to lie,
A speculative land of mystery;
The home, perchance, of monstrous men and things,
Dragons most huge, with crested heads and wings,
And giant trees, whose tops approached the sky,
Flowers dazzling hued, and gorgeous butterfly,—
Vain fancies all; but by such visions led,
The love of fame unto adventure wed,
Man rushes on to danger and to toil,
Nor recks what he may reap from peril and turmoil.

Full strong the breezes blew, but still the sea
Spread out its barren waste most wearily;
No continent allured the sailors' gaze
Sublimely breaking through the ocean haze,
Till at the last, when spring had just begun,
Its hills reposing in the morning sun,

THE COMING OF CAPTAIN COOK

A country rose to view ; a fertile land,
With mountains stretching far on either hand,
A country with the seal of might impressed,
Its destiny upon its face expressed,
And Cook beheld, with eyes and cheeks aflame,
A laurel added to his wreath of fame.

A vigorous folk these rugged islands reared,
A folk less to be loved than to be feared,
A race courageous, cruel to excess,
Their bold hearts beating strong with manliness ;
War was their trade and bloody deeds were rife,
Their souls rejoiced in slaughter and in strife ;
With horrid feasts the victors crowned the fray
And ate the victims of the battle day ;
No rites to any god these people gave,
Nor recked of joy or woe beyond the grave ;
Yet oft by them chivalric deed was done,
The gleamings of the soul's immortal sun.

A hollow surf resounded on the shore
And to the land the spoils of ocean bore,
Long æons had it rolled ere from afar
The Maori came in panoply of war
From famed Hawaiki, with courage high
To sail on unknown seas unflinchingly,
And through long ages yet to come the deep
Resonant music of the surf shall sweep
Around Zealandia's shores, a wild refrain
Borne from the bosom of the dangerous main.

Cook was the herald of a nobler life
When peaceful arts would banish human strife,

And men's dark passions, by just laws subdued,
Give place to feelings of a gentler mood.
When from the crystal vault which forms the sky
His vessel broke, its white sails towering high,
And speeding through the waves, with gallant prow,
Drew nigh the land, an anchor on each bow,
It came the messenger of novel things,
Revealer of men's deep imaginings,
New faiths, new creeds, new modes of life unknown
To those who dwelt within Zealandia's zone,
The searching rays of whose resplendent light
Would chase the darkness of barbaric night.

THE SOUTHERN ALPS

Ye mountains ribbed, and rude, and worn with age,
Sharp frosts of winter, and the tempest's rage,
Ye Southern Alps, that watch the spacious plain,
Outspread between your bases and the main—
The blue Pacific, vastest of the seas
That resonant with many harmonies
Their azure waves and foaming surges roll
About the mundane globe from Pole to Pole—
Strong are your ramparts, and your donjons rise
In piles successive to the lofty skies,
A wilderness of crags and peaks sublime
First fashioned in the mould of ancient Time
Before man yet had drawn the breath of life
Or e'er the Earth was stirred with human strife.
What stories could ye tell if ye had speech
Of æons whose strange chronicles would reach
To that primæval vision of the world
When from the sombre gloom of chaos hurled
The land, uprising from the boundless deep,
Emerged with plain, and vale, and mountain steep!
From your Titanic glaciers that descend
And downwards from your summits slowly wend
And creep along the ravines, rent and torn
By sudden terror from the earthquake born,
From your thick snows, that, in the early spring,
Fanned warmly by th' Australian breeze's wing,

Yield up a tide of waters, wild and coarse,
A turbid volume from a crystal source,
Come forth torrential rivers, bounding free
Through gorges cleft in rocky masonry,
Then, streaming here and there across the wold,
In courses devious and manifold,
Their floods commingle with th' unmeasured sea
And there are lost in its immensity.

Across your snowfields and through chasms deep
The sultry winds with boist'rous roarings sweep,
The wild nor'-wester, with its glowing blast,
Like breathings of a fiery spirit cast
Abroad to vex with its tempestuous rage
All sentient things that move upon Life's stage;
When o'er the plain its stormy blust'rings pass
The panting beast lies prone upon the grass,
A languor creeps and crawls throughout the blood,
The mind respondent takes a weary mood;
The leaves grow limp and shrivel on the trees,
The flowers are torn and scattered by the breeze;
At length the rain in welcome showers descends
And thus the tempest's wild emotion ends.

No castles hoary guard your summits grey,
No legend strange of gnome or of fay
Enchants your regions lorn, nor any tale
Of Lorelei's charming, or of Banshee's wail;
Your ravines ne'er have echoed battle cry,
Or sword's fierce clash, or dread artillery;
Your glories are your own, nor gain they aught
From mighty deeds or works that men have wrought;
Untouched by Art, by Nature ruled alone,
Ye dwell within the radiance of her throne.

THE SOUTHERN ALPS

In days of old your spacious valleys fed
The moa huge which, by its chieftains led,
Sought in your fastnesses a summer rest
In flocks like flecks of foam on Ocean's breast;
And lo! the kiwi weird, in garb antique,
A plumage strange, with its ground-probing beak,
Disturbed the night while seeking for its prey,
But slumbered in your caverns through the day;
The kea mewed; the heron slowly flew
Across your lakes and icy torrents blue.

O mountains decked by fingers of the Sun
In early morn, e'er day has scarce begun,
Robed then ye sit, in majesty sublime,
The sovereign lords that ruled'st from ancient time
This sea-begirdled region of the world
Beneath the Southern Cross incessant whirled;
And monarchs still shall be, till that dread day
When land, and sky, and sea shall pass away.

THE SOUTHERN NORSEMEN

How gallant were the men who roved
The Southern seas in days of old
Before the days whose chronicles
In legendary tales are told!

They braved the ocean in rude craft,
With vigour plied the heavy oar,
Arduous the toil and slow the pace,
For little sail the vessels bore.

Their compass was the sun by day,
By night the gleaming of the Cross
That hangs sublimely in the sky
Where Austral surges foam and toss.

The vast Pacific main they roamed
On grim adventure gaily bound,
They sought new isles, if such perchance
Might in its azure spheres be found.

The hymnings of its mighty voice
Heroic longings woke, and stirred
The man within them, and the noise
Of battlefield afar they heard.

Their fancy saw the savage foe
  Approach in war's horrent array,
Beheld him flying in full rout,
  Casting his useless arms away.

The marvels of an unknown world,
  Of nations fierce, and monsters dire;
Imagination's wayward brood,
  Filled their barbaric hearts with fire.

Wide rolled the surges, as they still
  Roll glorious with their flash of foam,
The sea-birds in slow circles flew,
  As now they o'er the ocean roam.

The Norsemen of the Southern globe
  These ancient mariners became,
O'er sea and many an isle they passed,
  Yet legend whispers not their name.

Dim relics of their ancient pride
  They left behind them, here and there,
So flotsam from the tempest's tide
  The ribbed and storm-beat sands oft bear.

A race that lived, and loved, and fought
  Undaunted in its vigorous prime,
And made the Southern world its own
  In that remote, primæval time.

The lands that once its presence knew,
From tropic isles to Zealand's snows,
Unchanged remain, as when they first
Before the Norsemen's eyes arose.

The ghosts of these departed souls
Shall haunt for ever and for aye
The great Pacific, and its winds
Shall chant for them a monody.

TANGAROA

GREAT is the power divine of Tangaroa
Who dwells amid the ocean depths where peace
Perpetual reigns; above, the surges roar,
Their noisy bellowings fright the startled air,
But muffled by the weight of waters cease
Nor reach the palace on the ocean floor.

Sometimes the god, beguiled by sunny hours,
Ascends and walks upon the azure main,
A fleecy cloud his majesty embowers,
Nor unattended moves the Lord of might,
Creatures innumerable compose his train,
Profuse as drops of rain in tropic showers.

The pearl-clad nautilus, with tiny sail,
In fleets of myriads glides on before,
The sky is darkened with the endless tale
Of sea-birds white, and brown, and grey,
The waves vibrate with life; none can be sure
If leaping fish or flashing waves prevail.

How dreadful Tangaroa in angry mood!
The waves are riven into vale and hill,
The stormy petrel screams across the flood,
The clouds dissolve in mist, the sky is hid,
The thunder's roarings Heaven's vast concave fill,
Creation trembles with the conflict rude.

His presence known to us ; his shape unknown,
If shape he hath that could by mortal eye
Be witnessed without danger to its own,
He manifests himself by power that thrills
The elements with his strong majesty
And makes them servants of his secret throne.

NEW ZEALAND

'Tis the land of the mystical fern
That spreads its green tracings on high
In the forest's deep glade that conceals
The dome of the crystalline sky;
The creepers that hang from the boughs,
The mosses that cling to their boles,
Clothe the trees like a garment, and hide
The shrines of the dryades' souls.

The land of the tui, bedight
With amice of rich, raven wings,
While, 'neath his most musical throat
A plume of white feathers outsprings;
The priest of the forest and stream
His clear, tuneful anthem is heard,
The chanting of liquescent notes
As they well from the soul of the bird.

A land where the mountains uprear
Their crests to the opaline sky,
The glaciers stretch down to the sea
And hear the great waves breaking nigh,

The song and the twitter of birds
  Give life to the wild, rocky glen,
Remote from the feverish world,
  Unknown to, untravelled by men.

The Titan who lies 'neath the earth
  In caverns tenebrous fast bound
Oft trembles with rage, and his voice
  Vibrates with a hoarse, rumbling sound;
The geyser boils up, and its steam
  Ascends like the ghost of a cloud,
While wreaths of a terrible smoke
  The volcano's summits enshroud,—

The land where the kiwi is born,
  That bird of a fashion unique,
Left lone on the Earth like a waif
  Surviving from ages antique;
What tales could it tell of the Past
  Were it gifted with powers of speech,
Of the years that lie hidden beyond
  The days which man's chronicles reach!

When the moa roamed over the land
  The lord of the hills and the plain
In flocks that resembled the waves,
  Unnumbered, that wrinkle the main;
While, haunting the lake and the marsh,
  Huge reptiles, begot in the slime,
Seemed creatures that Nature had called
  Into life in the ultimate Time.

NEW ZEALAND

The land that is washed by the surge
  Which rolls from the East and the West,
From the frozen retreats of the South,
  From the tropical ocean's warm breast;
Thus, laved by these manifold seas,
  It lists to the winds as they call
From the uttermost parts of the world,
  From the doors of Æolus's hall.

THE SOLANDER *

WHERE the Pacific
  Rolls its long surges,
Vast and terrific,
  Clothed with white tresses,
Chanting sea dirges,
  Requiems of seamen
Lost in caresses
  Of the mermaiden,
    Stands the Solander.

Sea-fowl in legions
  Gather around it,
Ere to far regions
  Their armies take wing;
On its rude crags sit
  Penguin and petrel,
Musing and blinking,
  Sombre and mournful.

In its caves scattered
  Bones lie and moulder;
Wind-worn and battered,
  Perishing slowly.

* The Solander is a lofty rock rising out of the ocean near the western entrance of Foveaux Straits.

THE SOLANDER

Once the beholder
  Saw a man breathing,
Life in his nostrils,
  Mind his brow wreathing.

Gone are his glories,
  Vanished, forgotten,
Crumbled the stories
  Of his house of life ;
On rocky floor strewn
  His relics are left,
The sport of the winds,
  The food of sea-eft.

Watchman unsleeping
  O'er storm-riven straits
Where gales go sweeping
  And great waves are born,
Whose sullen roar shakes
  The roof of the world,
In huge masses torn
  Their foamings are swirled !

Giant Solander
  Thus guards a wild shore,
Sees the whales wander,
  A maritime host,
Like fountains they pour
  The fine beaten foam
In the air, then seek
  The Nereids' home.

THE SOLANDER

When clothed with prime force
  The globe first began
To roll on its course
  Strange creatures took life,
The heralds of man ;
  In sea and on land
Huge monsters were rife,
  A misshapen band.

From that day till now
  Has Solander stood,
With dark, rugged brow
  O'erlooking the main,
Whose deep, azure flood
  Clings fast to the Earth
Where fierce tempests reign,
  And storm-winds have birth.

EASTER ISLAND

THIS timeworn globe is rich with many things
Stranger than our most strange imaginings,
Some secrets are supremely Nature's own,
If told, the workings of her loom were known,
While some are memories of lost nations who
Mechanic skill and occult learning knew;
With art and toil they fashioned mighty fanes
Where ruin now and desolation reigns,
Their gods, once deemed immortal, lived their day,
Then like their worshippers they passed away.

Upon the pathway of the surge that sweeps
Across the South Pacific as it leaps
In foaming frenzy half around the globe,
Displaying wide its blue and flowing robe,
An island lies where one may rest awhile,
Remote from continent or other isle;
'Tis but a speck upon a boundless sea,
A shrine of ancient gods and mystery.

Once barbarous priests in this lone island dwelt
Whose hearts fanatical no pity felt,
Untouched by sight or sound of human woe,
Nor heeding suffering or what tears might flow.
Their temple was of Cyclopean size,
Its stones arranged in massive harmonies,

The giant blocks conveyed from distant lands
Were fashioned by the work of many hands,
Within a chamber, whose perpetual gloom
Intensified a silence of the tomb,
Their gods were ranged, strange gods of carven stone,
Each deity majestic on its throne,
Their names now vanished, like the thunder peal
Which for a moment makes the country reel,
But when 'tis passed we talk of its dread roar
A few short hours, then speak of it no more!

Before the colonnade an altar stood,
An altar often drenched with human blood,
Thus men appease their gods with scarlet dye,
As if gods revelled in ferocity,
The victims ravished from a land afar,
Sad captives taken in the net of war,
And for the hungry gods the best were slain,
The Earth was robbed that Heaven might not complain.

The rites that in the inmost shrine were held,
The visions that the frenzied priests beheld,
The sacred lore from outer world concealed,
The mysteries to the chosen seer revealed—
All these have floated, on Time's ample wings,
Unto the limbo of forgotten things,
But still about the island's rocky shore
Unceasingly the ocean surges roar,
They keep the secrets of the sacred isle,
None can gain them by force, nor any guile.

THE PACIFIC OCEAN

THE SOUTH

Ocean Pacific, vast are thy surges,
Beating and laving the broad Southern globe,
Hiding the ribs of old Earth with thy mantle,
Splendid the hues of thy far-flowing robe;
Deep are thy solitudes,
Wide thy dominions,
Where the grey sea-bird sails on to its rest,
Seeking some islet,
Lonely, storm-battered,
There with its fellow to make a rude nest.

Borne on thy billows,
Rolls the strong sea-boat,
Speck in the vastness,
Thus it doth float,—
Ocean, and Heaven, and albatross stately,
Mollyhawk, nelly, and many a petrel,
Circling, ere flying unto a far bourne;
Buoyant their bearing,
Hearts full of daring,
Their wings by the grasp of the wild tempest torn;

Dolphin and porpoise with gambols unwieldy
Chasing the flying fish through the sea haze,
Whales with their fountains, sharks clothed with terror—
On these and like marvels the mariners gaze.

Icebergs gigantic
From the Antarctic
Melt in thy waves when they touch thy warm zone,
Crystalline palaces,
Caverns iridescent,
Vanish like fanciful dreams that have flown;
Messengers mystic,
Robed in white samite,
Come they from out of the gloom of the South,
Bearing strange messages,
Wonderful presages,
Heralds, and prophets, and priests of the South.

THE TROPICS

Beauteous the islands that gem thy broad bosom,
Where splendours torrescent rain down from the sky
Flushing thy waters with glory from heaven,
The gold and the turquoise commingling their dye;
Lulled by the sound of thy surfs falling softly
Upon the white sands that begirdle his home
Lo! the brown islander, child of the tropic,
Lives languid and heedless, unwilling to roam;
Strange are his temples,
Wondrous his deities,
Wild the enchantments
Of the fierce wizards
Gibbering and dancing and claiming their toll
From terrors and tremblings that frighten his soul.

Sometimes to the hearing,
The dreamy air stirring,
Come the resonant chimes of the Christian church bell,
With mien staid and sober
Unto the beholder
The people troop forth to hear the priest tell
Of faith that redeems us,
And pure lives that lead us
By steps unto Heaven, where sin hath no store,
But deep in their hearts burns
The flame on the altar
To gods that love slaughter,
And in spirit they worship those gods as of yore.

Oft on thy waters,
Lonely, forsaken,
The frail boat has rested when hope was nigh spent,
Sadly the castaways
O'er the wide ocean gaze,
And a soul every day from its body is rent.

Through numberless ages
Thy blue waters quivered
Beneath the full eye of the flame-vestured sun,
And races begotten
By men long forgotten,
Their day bright and joyous until it was done,
Upon thy green islands,
Wrapped round with thy foaming,
Dwelt lonely, untroubled,
Remote from the fever,

The fire and the passion that kindle and shake
The kingdoms of Europe,
The kingdoms of Asia,
When the thoughts of strong thinkers from slumber awake.

THE NORTH

Where frigid Alaska
Looks forth on Kamschatka,
And ice-mists hang thick in the grim Arctic zone,
The boom of thy surges
Sounds like the sad dirges
That rise from the grottoes when sea nymphs make moan.
Far off are the streamings
The tremulous beamings
Of spirits that flit o'er the northernmost sky,
Stately their gestures,
Splendid their vestures
Moving, and gleaming, and flashing on high,
Clamant, unceasing,
Sometimes increasing,
Sometimes decreasing,
Roars thy great voice 'neath the roof of the world,
Echoing, sounding,
Deep tones rebounding,
From continent unto vast continent hurled.

MACQUARIE ISLAND

NIGH to the Antarctic,
  Where thunders the ocean
Restless through the seasons,
  Unceasing its motion—
Storm-clouds like grey garments
  Hang o'er it in masses
As if thickly gathered
  O'er Neptune's morasses—
There sits a lone islet,
  Upspringing from darkness
Where dwells the great kraken
  Of unmeasured vastness,
From other lands parted,
  By the wild waters bound,
From sunny lands severed
  By a broad compass round.

Here smile no green valleys
  Besprinkled with flowers,
Where gay fancy dallies
  With inconstant hours;
Most rude is the vesture
  That clothes the isle's form,
A cloak to defend it
  From the breath of the storm.

MACQUARIE ISLAND

King of the sea-fowl,
  Albatross mighty,
Broods here in legions
  On nests unsightly;
Creatures soft breasted
  He wins, one by one,
Then seeks distant regions
  More loved by the sun.

Sea lions ungainly
  Bask on the rude rocks
At whose steep bases
  The grim ocean knocks,
Revel the lions
  In frost and in snow,
Gladly they listen
  When stormy winds blow.

Mists ever flitting
  In weird cohorts past,
Ghosts of sea rovers
  All hurrying fast
Unto the strange bourne
  Where souls of the brave
In myriads meet
  From under the wave.

Through the dim gloaming
  Comes wanly the roar
Of surges that batten
  Upon a far shore;

MACQUARIE ISLAND

'Tis the voice of the surf
  Whose cold waters roll
On the rampart that guards
  Th' Antarctic Pole.

O sentinel lone of the Southern sea,
  Faithful thou watchest for aye;
Thou seest the loom of the icebergs white.
  The aurora's lightnings play!

THE ANTARCTIC

WHERE frost eternal hides the land beneath its mantle cold,
Where grows not grass, nor herb, nor shrub, nor e'er a living tree,
While solitude broods o'er the plain, and o'er the mountains old,
There rolls and breaks unceasingly the great Antarctic sea.

Its surges gnaw the rugged base of icy ramparts vast,
They crawl into the fissures deep and frigid caverns lorn,
Till, like a fleet of ghostly ships from off their moorings cast,
The glittering bergs, upon the wave, to northern climes are borne.

The boist'rous whale here roams at will, nor fears the sharp harpoon,
The fur-clad seal and walrus huge find here an icy home,
Upon the coast, in order strange, the penguins muse and moon,
And sea birds wild, with mournful cry, wail o'er the ocean foam.

Could we but look behind the veil, and pierce the mists of Time,
And view the changes that have passed across this region wild
Since first the Earth began to roll along its course sublime,
And Nature gave her primal kiss unto her new-born child,

What visions bright of sunny lands might greet our wondering eyes,
Where forests green and meadows sweet adorn the fertile soil,
Where novel creatures climb the hills, ascending to the skies,
And races strange of human kind pursue their daily toil!

What language did they speak, or was their speech of divers modes?
What gods did they invoke with prayer, what priests ruled in their fanes?
What faiths controlled their thoughts and ways, illumined their abodes,
Consoled their lives with pious hopes and lightened mortal pains?

What poets wrote their songs and touched the chords of every heart?
What instruments of music thrilled the air with tremors sweet,
Made the soul from out its slumbers with a sudden passion start,
Or with soft emotions made the ardent pulses beat?

Did the sun more fulgent radiance fling from off his fiery ball?
Did the moon resplendent shining in a brighter chariot rise?
Did finer constellations glitter through the night's funereal pall?
Did more frequent comets range and flash across the frightened skies?

What cities lie, their names unknown, within an icy grave,
Where human life, full flushed and keen, once held its fervid course,
Where mirth and sadness, joy and woe, the coward and the brave,
A wild tumultuous flood rolled by, resistless in its force?

Fast locked within its frosty shrine the secret lies concealed,
The great Antarctic roars around and thunders o'er its bed,
Nor shall the shrine be opened or its mystery revealed,
Till Gabriel's trump shall shake the world and rouse the sleeping dead.

A CHANGED LAND

O SOMBRE forest! rude and old,
  Doomed in brief space to disappear,
Your giant trees and leafy shades
  Grow fewer with each passing year.

The birds that once made blithe your glades
  Now from their ancient dwellings fly,
Some to discern new refuges
  And some to perish utterly.

O robes of fern that clothed the down
  With garments green and woven dense,
That hid the gaunt form of the Earth,
  Its mighty ribs and limbs immense,

Soon will you cease to drape the land
  You clothed for many a century,
And your luxuriance but remain
  A thing of pleasant memory.

Time waves his wand, and lo! the scenes
  Enacted on this mundane stage
In ordered sequence follow on
  Successively from age to age.

A CHANGED LAND

The Maori lingers for awhile,
  But sees the fair land of his sires
Besprinkled with the white man's homes,
  The smoke upcurling from their fires.

The golden gorse defines the field
  Where lusty grows the foreign wheat,
The lambs frisk on the English grass,
  The kine stroll by on lumbering feet,

The horses draw the plough that cleaves
  The mellow soil into broad flakes,
The seagull follows on its trail
  And from its bed the fat worm takes.

Where once in brown and scattered tufts
  The tussock studded all the plain
Lush farms and homesteads meet the eye
  And swiftly rolls the roaring train.

The ground-lark that, to greet the sun,
  Flew blithely from its lowly nest,
Now sits in silence and forlorn,
  By new-found enemies oppressed.

Not long the Maori shall survive,
  Nor counted be a living race,
The wheel of Fate has turned, and he
  Must to another yield his place.

A CHANGED LAND

The deep abyss of Time contains
  The wrecks of nations, small and great,
Some shot their light throughout the world,
  Some flickered in a petty state.

Each had its day; each played its part
  Amid the scheme of earthly things,
But now its name in Memory's halls
  More faintly and more faintly rings.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SOUTHERN GLOBE

O Spirit of the Southern globe!
  Awake from sleep and speak to me,
Reveal the secrets of thy past,
  And what thy coming fate may be!
The shadows of forgetfulness
  Rest darkly o'er the ages when
Thy seas and lands untraversed were
  By th' adventurous Northern men.

The storms of passion that assail
  And rouse the soul to mighty deeds,
Sometimes of right, sometimes of wrong,
  Whithersoe'er the tempest leads,
Alike beat where the fleecy snows
  All things in their white mantle wreathe,
Or where the tropic sun burns fierce,
  Wherever mortals live and breathe.

Hast e'er a Helen proudly walked
  Beneath the turquoise Austral skies,
With radiant beauty unapproached,
  Love shining in her glorious eyes?

Have fleets and armies sailed the seas
To bear her back to whence she fled ?
Have smiles that dimpled perfect cheeks
Bestrewn the land with countless dead ?

Or has some ruthless conqueror burst
Upon these regions like a flame,
And made each green and fruitful isle
A desert whereso'er he came,
Till tribes and peoples rose amain,
United 'gainst the common foe,
And hurled him from his throne of pride
Unto destruction's depths below ?

Mayhap some Chatham, nobly urged
By patriotism's sacred fire
To augment his country's power and make
It mount the scale of nations higher,
Has sought to spread its narrow bounds,
Until they reached from East to West,
So that its people, growing great,
A broader life should manifest.

Or what shall be thy fortune when
The future opes its banner wide,
And age on age shall lead the van
Of th' advancing human tide ?
Shall nations new successive rise
From embers of decadent States,
Bearing mankind to higher ways,
And nearer Wisdom's golden gates ?

Strange ringings tingle in my ears
  Of voices that have passed away,
Filling the air with notes confused
  And words of a forgotten day,
We dimly hear behind the veil
  That hides the future from our ken
The growing murmurs of a race
  Of nobler women and of men.

THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

THESE biting winds that come from icy lands,
The frozen ramparts of the Southern Pole,
Across a desert space of ocean where
The sea hawk from the little gull takes toll,

Stir not the blood with an enchantment breathed
Through every fibre of our mortal frame,
Nor waken thoughts that ripen into deeds
That win for guerdon glorious bays of fame,

For they sweep not o'er regions where brave men
Have sought adventure and achieved renown,
Whose spirits mingle with the winds that blow
O'er seas and lands that once by them were known.

The world is but a dullard thing till it
Doth palpitate with human hopes and fears
And acts of splendid note, whose purple flame
Illuminates the immemorial years.

Bright constellations gleam in Austral skies,
But gleam in cold magnificence alone,
They have not seen majestic empires rise
Nor viewed the terror of the falling throne.

THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

The broad Pacific spreads its mighty waves
  O'er half the compass of the Southern globe,
The silver of its surges decorates
  The splendid trailings of its azure robe.

But history hath not dowered this sea with fame,
  Nor wedded it to man's heroic deeds,
Song hath not draped it with a magic spell
  Nor with the visions that gay fancy breeds.

Yet it may be that, in far days to come,
  The mists of Time shall consecrate this sea,
And giant shapes and wondrous beings loom
  Adown the vistas of antiquity.

THE AUSTRAL STEAMSHIP

Lo! I see the lights agleaming as the steamship o'er the main
Passes swiftly through the deep and silent watches of the night,
While the salt waves cleave asunder in majestic surges whirled,
And backward in the shadow floats a trail of shimmering white.

Yea, a thousand hearts are beating in this palace of the seas
And its iron walls are dripping with the splashes of the foam,
The Austral stars' unnumbered fires are burning bright and full
As the steamship bears its living freight unto their northern home.

From the giant funnels streaming drift the sparks upon the wind
Like a splendid banner floating in the dusky atmosphere,
And the sleeping dolphin, wakened, flashes down a lustrous slope
Driven to the ocean caverns by the scourgings of his fear.

Golden treasures it bears gaily, won by toil and wondrous skill
From the secret hiding-places of the old and strong-ribbed Earth,
Unto the marts of all mankind, where men like ants are found,
Where rich delights, and stirring deeds, and mighty thoughts have birth.

Never galleon half so splendid, never treasure-ship so proud
Sailed across the broad Pacific in the golden days of Spain
As the Austral steamship driven by a giant in his prison,
Throbbing in the silent darkness on its way across the main.

SONS OF THE SOUTH

O Sons of the South, how bright is your morning,
  Rising and flashing from out the dark sea—
Ocean of ages, whose bosom is teeming
  With thoughts for the centuries yet to be!
Splendid the beams of your promised dominion
  Ruling the lands 'neath the blue Austral sky;
Strong is the gleam of your powerful sceptre,
  Glorious the vision it opes to the eye!

O Sons of the South, how proud your vocation!
  Heirs of great conquests and realms hardly won;
'Tis yours to maintain the wide-spreading Empire,
  The fruit of the deeds by your forefathers done;
Mighty its cities, with multitudes surging,
  Vast its lush meadows and fields of rich grain;
Swift are its ships, like the birds in their number,
  Flecking the ocean throughout its domain.

From the old Past with its manifold wisdom
  Ring the clear words of the spirit that breathed
Life in the nation when, toilworn and weary,
  Misfortune seemed with its destiny wreathed,
To the fierce joy of the red, rolling battle,
  To the full pride of the land and the main,
To the wide realms where mind is immortal,
  The voices invite ye, in stirring refrain.

Oh cherish the rights which your forefathers won
  Through labour and pain, the hazard of life,
But heed not the clack of the demagogue's tongue,
  His noisy appeals to passion and strife;
Slaves are the people who kneel at the altar
  By ignorance raised to some god unknown;
Free are the people who bridle their passions
  And bow before Reason upon her proud throne!

THE FALL OF THE KAURI TREE

Now shuddering falls the kauri from his throne,
The monarch of a forest vast and dim,
His mighty trunk with many a spreading limb
Descends, then on the trembling ground lies prone;
Where erst the fairy fern and moss made known
Their tender graces 'mid a chastened light
A sudden glare bursts in and puts to flight
The sylvan beauty of the forest lone.
The monarch's birth was in the ancient days
Ere man upon Zealandia's shores had trod
When o'er the mountain and the tussocked sod
The huge-legged moa cast its far-reaching gaze;
Shaggy with centuries the royal head
Beneath the European axe lies dead.

Thus we, the children of a modern time,
Destroy the bloom of Nature; nor endure
The shadow of her mystery and lure,
Or heed the music of her throbbing chime;
Our dullard ears refuse the glorious rhyme
Which she relates to such as list her voice,
That makes the pulses of the blood rejoice

And floods with beauty e'en the terrene slime;
Her secret haunts our jealous thoughts offend,
We claim the bounds of knowledge to define
By printed book, by compass, and by line,
And thus the veil from Nature's face to rend,
Yet still the ocean's anthem peals alway,
Nor do the clouds upon their courses stay.

TONGARIRO

O Tongariro! lord of many realms
  Dark, subterranean, and where lightnings dwell,
  While the dark rumblings of their thunders fell
With blighting fears the reason overwhelms;
From thy great altar smoke upriseth ever,
  Perpetual token of thy hidden power
  That, manifested in some sudden hour,
May the strong Earth from its foundations sever;
The country round wears trappings of thy might,
  And, lo! a spacious lake is wide outspread
  Where flit the phantoms of the Maori dead,
And the hot geyser pants throughout the night;
  Thou lookest from thy throne upon the sea,
  Far off, to man remote, yet seeming nigh to thee.

Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
305 De Neve Drive - Parking Lot 17 • Box 951388
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1388
Return this material to the library from which it was borrowed.

NON-RENEWABLE
ILL-UNB
MAR 2 6 2002

DUE 2 WKS FROM DATE RECEIVED

UCLA ACCESS SERVICES BL19
Interlibrary Loans
11630 University Research Library
Box 951575
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575

Form L9-

PR Purnell -
6031 The modern
P975m Arthur and
other poems.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 555 901 8

PR
6031
P975m

Un